

the second volume

MEMOIRS
OF
THE ANCIENT
HOUSE OF CLARENDON.



m 3 volume

MEMOIRS
OF
THE ANCIENT
HOUSE OF CLARENDON.

Son
A NOVEL.

x. produce of no good
I left no Business for this idle Trade.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,
AT THE
Minerva-press,
LEADENHALL-STREET.

M.DCC.XCVI.

THE
HOUSE OF CLARENCE



IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,
AT THE
MUSEUM PRESS,
LEADENHALL STREET.
M.DCCCXV.

THE
ANCIENT HOUSE

OF
CLARENDON.

CHAP. VIII.

“AND may I,” said the Baroneſs,
“beg to be informed what has ſo
ſuddenly occaſioned this alteration in your
reſolutions, that have ſo lately flattered us
with a long continuance of your company?”

“Your Ladyſhip may be aſſured, they
are important reaſons that can induce me
Vol. II. B to

to forsake the society I have hitherto preferred to any other; but you will add one more to the numberless obligations I already owe you, if you will excuse my naming them."

The Baroness continued, though in vain, to entreat to be informed of what Lady Elinor was determined not to explain; and the Baron, perceiving she was dissatisfied, determined at once to clear the whole matter. "I cannot," said he, "suffer you to depart, while you are impressed with a single idea injurious to the sentiments that you have long entertained of the Baroness, for that suspicion is the occasion of your departure, I am not ignorant, and I must acknowledge there has been but too much apparent reason for it; but the Baroness and myself, fearful of the consequences, have mutually determined to entrust you with the secret of our present extraordinary conduct.

"The

“ The person who, within these few days past, has given you, by his actions, such cause of displeasure, is now, and long has been, an inhabitant of the Castle. You look surprized, and well you may ; at the same time too, Lady Elinor, I must acknowledge we have paid but an ill compliment to the sincere attachment you have long borne us, (for I insist on a share) in having so long practised dissimulation ; but the person most particularly concerned, was too dear to my heart to suffer me to divulge the story—a story, good Heavens, what a story ! one, alas, that is doomed to destroy every happiness with which the Gods have blessed me.”

The Baron traversed the room in great disorder, and strove, but in vain, to hide the starting tear.

Lady Elinor would gladly have excused herself from hearing the recital of his sor-

rows, and severely blamed herself for having, even for a moment, entertained suspicions injurious to the honor of her friend; she was fully convinced, from the agitation of the Baron, that, be the secret what it would that pressed on his mind, he would never have disclosed it on any other account than to justify his Lady, and that he would most certainly never have concerned himself about it, but for that reason.

But her excuses were vain; the Baron insisted on being heard, and Lady Clarendon so warmly seconded his suit, that Lady Elinor, believing it was his wish, at length, though not without much reluctance, consented to be again seated: the Baron bowed, and apologizing for the little ceremony he had treated her with, took his place between her and Lady Clarendon, and in a more composed voice continued his narrative.

He

He told her, that in the North Gallery there resided a person, whom herself, and all that had ever known her, regarded as long since dead, and who, most assuredly, would never, on this side the grave, change that residence which now was her's.

“The gentleman,” continued the Baron, “whom you saw in the hall with the Baronefs, has been in the Castle upwards of a week ; but as we are not upon friendly terms, and you too have been a stranger to him, you will no doubt wonder that I should entertain in the Castle a person whom I have spoke of in these terms, yet be assured there is a cause to justify it ; his business here was to entreat us to influence the fair prisoner I have mentioned to become his wife, and we have at last, though with much difficulty prevailed ; and it was on receiving from the Baronefs this (I do believe) much wished-for intelligence, that he indulged his gratitude in terms, which certainly,

tainly, to one like you, unacquainted with his situation, must have conveyed a very different meaning.

“And now,” said the Baron, “I have, I hope, fully removed all Lady Elinor’s reasons for departing, and will flatter myself it will be long delayed.”

Lady Elinor now, in her turn, entreated her worthy friends to pardon her for having thought wrong of them; but they insisted on her being silent on the subject, for she had, they said, certainly acted quite right, considering appearances, which it was impossible for her, or any one else, to divine the meaning of.

“But,” said the Baron, “I have not done all this for nothing, and shall hope to be rewarded for it; and as Lady Clarendon has suffered me to plead her cause, I will now leave her to plead mine, which

which is, to use her interest with her friend to be present at these secret and, I fear, ill-fated nuptials; and that once settled, if my wishes are accepted, I shall hope never again to see this unworthy bridegroom."

Thus saying, he departed, leaving Lady Elinor mute with the astonishment his words had excited, which was now interrupted by the Baroness.

"I hope," said she, holding out her hand to her friend, "my dear Elinor will pardon the dissimulation with which I have acted, but as the affair more immediately concerns the Baron's family than mine, though I confess I am highly interested for every one concerned in it, I could not think, in this instance, of divulging it even to her."

"My dear Madam, you must pardon me, if I treat your apologies as you did

mine, and refuse to listen to them ; for I had, most assuredly, no right to be informed of any thing that my Lord and you thought proper to conceal ; and, I confess, I should blame him for having told me now, but that, from his words, I think my presence may, perhaps, prevent the necessity of entrusting the secret to any other person, who might not possibly be as faithful to the trust as I will."

" You will then be present at this marriage ?"

" No doubt I will, if it is the wish of the Baron and yourself."

" You are too good—how few like you, Elinor, would thus condescend to visit one, whom, in the opinion of the world, is to be shunned by all ?"

" As

“As to that, Gertrude, you know it is nothing new in me to be singular; but I am sure, though I do not know her story, the lady cannot be unworthy, as you, tho’ from humanity you might protect, would not associate with her; but,” added she, “I should not wish to intrude on her retirement, and she may not, perhaps, like my being present—will you have the goodness to discover her wishes on the occasion?”

“Of that,” rejoined the Baroness, “you may assure yourself there is no need; she is already well acquainted with you, and has, to both the Baron and myself, often expressed her sorrow that fate could no longer suffer her to call you friend; but the Baron never would permit me to introduce you to her, whom the world would perhaps censure you for knowing; and nothing, I believe, but the recent circumstance would ever have induced him to

B 5

change

change his sentiments; but we are delaying the pleasure you intend her; I will go and make her acquainted with our conversation."

"For Heaven's sake, who is the lady, my dear Gertrude?—The Baron too, I recollect, hinted that I had known her in happier days, but the wonder in which my ideas have been lost banished his words from my recollection."

"Of that, my friend, you must at present be contented to remain in ignorance; but I am sure your heart will not fail to acknowledge her who was once almost as great a favourite as myself."

"Be speedy then in your return, for my imagination is on the rack."

The absence of the Baroness was not of long duration, and it was easy to discern

cern the satisfaction she felt on Lady Elinor's ready acquiescence to return with her immediately to her friend's chamber; but as these visits were always visits of secrecy, the Baroness led the way to her room, where, after telling her women she should dispense with their attendance for that evening, and bidding them order coffee to the North Gallery, she, as soon as they had left the apartment, went to the room she had mentioned; the coffee was brought, and she told her attendants the Baron and herself were at home to nobody but Sir Hildebrand Fitz-Alwin, and desired not to be interrupted; and no sooner was he gone, than drawing a sliding pannel in the wainscot, which was concealed by the tapestry hangings, she led Lady Elinor by a secret passage, which was made in the walls of the Castle, round one entire side of it, till they arrived at the North Tower, that was blown down in the late storm, or, at least, demolished about that

B 6

time,

time, though it was not certainly known by what means.

They entered by a key, of which the Baroness was in possession, upon that range of apartments which had been for so many years shut up, and which every domestic in the Castle believed to be totally uninhabited.

On passing through one of these chambers, Lady Clarendon observed to her companion, that they must step lightly, as they were very near some part of the Castle where they were liable to be overheard, and she did not wish them either to know that there was such a passage of communication, or that she had ever occasion to use it.

They at length reached a superb drawing room, when Lady Clarendon, tapped lightly at the door of the adjoining apartment,

apartment, which was instantly opened by the Baron.

But what words can describe the astonishment of Lady Elinor, when, in the fair fragile form which stood beside him, she recollected the features of one who had, within one short year, been as her own sister, and whom she thought she had within that space followed to the peaceful tomb of her illustrious ancestors.

She looked delicate and emaciated, and a pensive languor that sat on her brow, rendered her, if possible, more interesting; but the cause of her retirement was obvious to Lady Elinor at the first glance, for her appearance indicated an approaching christening, rather than the marriage which had been so lately mentioned, an observation which, however it might, from the well-known propriety of the lady's conduct, excite the astonishment and pity of Lady Elinor,

Elinor, she carefully confined to her own bosom, nor suffered one transient glance to wound the feelings of her new-found friend, who declared she had not for a long time experienced so much satisfaction as she enjoyed at present.

The Baron, who watched her every look with the most ardent anxiety, seemed to partake of joy or sorrow only as it affected her ; while the Baroness exerted her utmost abilities to make every one as happy as their situation would admit of.

The hour that was to part them, though late, arrived, regretted by all ; and on their taking leave, the fair unknown expressed to Lady Elinor the pleasure she had felt on Lady Clarendon's having informed her of the favor she intended to confer on her, and added, she would claim the performance of it on Thursday. " I am sensible," said she, " that you must think me very confident

confident in talking so calmly of my marriage, while my appearance indicates that it should not now be to take place; but trust me, Lady Elinor, was there one circumstance to cause a blush upon the cheek of modesty, I had never intreated Lady Clarendon to engage you to be present; and indulgent as she is, I know she would never have consented to it.—I know you are acquainted with my unfortunate history; but there is yet much of which you are uninformed, and I have made it my request that Lovel and the Baroness will take the trouble to acquaint you with those particulars of which, I own, I want fortitude to speak; without an agitation that I am unable to support till then (though nothing can afford me more pleasure than your company): I do not ask a repetition of the favor you have conferred upon me, while you think I am culpable; I know it would give you pain, though politeness might

might influence you to the suffering relative of a friend."

The party soon after separated, and Lady Elinor returned with the Baron and his Lady by the same secret passage to the drawing-room, where the rest of the evening was spent in acquainting her with the history of the fair unfortunate.

"And often," said Edgar, "have I solicited, but in vain, to know the conclusion of her interesting narrative; but my mother told me she was under a solemn promise never to divulge that or her name; and there was but one consideration which could have induced her to trust me with so much: that reason was, that as my father was long since deceased, who was the only person, herself excepted, who could clear up this mysterious business, and there being many reasons, she said, to believe it would one day be investigated, she preferred making a
confidant

confidant of me (God help me) to any other, for Raimond was then in France; and I do solemnly assure you, that though I am not the most considerate being in the world, I never mentioned it before to any one, except my brother; and I do not know that I should have acquainted him, but I could not keep it to myself any longer."

Sir Raimond bowed, and thanked his brother for the compliment.

"But," continued Edgar, "I could wish it may be still a secret amongst ourselves, till the time of enquiry arrives, which my mother believed to be certain, though she could form no conjecture as to the time."

They agreed that his proposal was certainly the mode of conduct most proper to be adopted; for it was evident that Lord and Lady Clarendon did not think proper

per to elucidate the mystery, and would consequently be displeased at any endeavour they might make to arrive at the knowledge of what they had taken so much precaution to conceal.

Sir Raimond said, that on his return to England, where he had not the happiness to arrive time enough to see Lady Fitz-Alwin, he received from his brother a packet in her own hand, directed to his particular care, with the following directions : “ papers concerning the family of the Baron Clarendon, which I desire my son Raimond never to lose or part with, nor to open till required by him or Lady Clarendon.” Scarce had Walter heard him to a conclusion, before he expressed a desire to see them ; but to this proposal Sir Raimond resolutely, though with politeness, expressed his inability to comply ; and as the rest of the party joined in his opinion, the motion was dropt by Walter, who

who begged Edgar would tell them what more he knew concerning the fair inhabitant of the North Gallery.

Edgar continued his narrative in the following terms: "The Baron" he continued, "after acquainting Lady Elinor with some other particulars, mentioned to his Lady, his idea that the presence of some gentleman would be necessary on Thursday, as a witness of the marriage, and wished to know whom amongst their friends she would recommend for that purpose."

"I think," said she, "my Lord, the fewer people are entrusted with the secret, the more probability there is of its being kept; and as the interests of your friend Sir Hildebrand and my friend Elinor seem to be much the same (nay, you always frown, Elinor, but certainly appearances are against you), I think no person can be more proper than him to be entrusted."

"Well,

“ Well, Gertrude, I am quite of your opinion. Now, Lady Elinor, favor me with yours : shall it be Sir Hildebrand ? ”

“ Indeed, my Lord, I care not who it is—it is indeed a matter perfectly indifferent to me.”

“ And who,” said Sir Hildebrand, who just then entered the apartment, “ who is so unhappy as to be indifferent to Lady Elinor Grey ? ”

“ Even yourself, Sir,” replied the Baron; “ but you shall hear.”

Lord Clarendon then told his friend the debate he had interrupted, and thus, added he, as the lady will not decide, I am at a loss how to proceed.

“ Then be so no longer, my Lord, elect me, and as Lady Elinor is only indifferent,
we

we must endeavour to deserve and gain her favor."

The Baroness declared Sir Hildebrand had very happily adjusted the difference, and the rest of the evening was passed in the utmost harmony.

On the purposed morning, the marriage was privately performed by a priest of the Baron's chapel, with no other witnesses than Lady Elinor and Sir Hildebrand, and the Lord and Lady Clarendon, and then for the first and last time, Lady Elinor beheld the bridegroom, in the presence of the Baron; they spoke but little to each other, yet it was easy to perceive that a strong attachment subsisted between them, though for some particular reason they were enemies in appearance.

"I never could obtain," said Edgar,
"the most distant idea of what or who she
was,

was, or any thing more relating to this history, except that neither the cavalier or the lady were ever known to quit the castle, and that in less than six months all the north side of the castle was entirely shut up, for before that time it had only been so in part; the lights which were formerly visible in that quarter were now no longer seen, and Lord and Lady Clarendon never went near it; and so much did they adhere to this rule, that even in their walks the north rampart was carefully avoided, except once when the Baron went out alone, and was observed standing weeping, and in great agitation of mind, with his eyes fixed on the north turret, from whence the Baroness brought him to the castle, for she had seen him from the window, and it was circulated amongst the domestics that their Lord was ill.

It may naturally be supposed that, however secretly any person might be concealed
in

in the castle, it was impossible not in some measure to excite suspicion : lights had been often seen in those apartments, yet it was well known no part of the family ever made use of them : various noises too had been frequently heard, and more than once when some one of the domestics, more courageous than his fellows, had ventured to follow these noises, in hopes of discovering from whence they proceeded : a figure had been seen to glide along the distant galleries, and seek concealment in flight ; and as a very few of these occurrences had no doubt effectually damped the courage of these adventurers, so as to put an entire stop to all farther attempts to discover the mystery, many had believed that the Baron had there concealed some one, whom he never intended again to behold the light, but for what reason, or who it was, they knew not ; but as the Baron's father

ther sometimes came to the castle, which had not formerly been his custom, and his eldest son Lord Henry never accompanied him, they thought it more than probable that he was the person confined, and offered up fervent prayers to heaven to turn the heart of the Baron from his ill designs.

Long had this been the prevailing opinion at the castle; but now what were they to think, what but that the Baron had either by the point of his own dagger, or that of some other person, consigned his brother to oblivion, and that in consequence of his untimely end, his spirit walked the castle.

Many, in consequence of the terror this idea excited, forsook the service of the Baron, who was at last so much disturbed by the assertion gaining ground, that he laid his absolute command on all who chose to continue in his service, to be dumb for ever

ever on the the subject ; and to such as approved not of obliging him, he gave leave to depart, at the same time giving them a sufficiency to support themselves.

This generosity of the Baron's, which arose from nothing more than a desire of doing them a service, whose folly had thrown them on the world, did not fail to draw upon him the most severe and pointed reflections. It was soon circulated abroad that the castle of Clarendon was so disturbed by supernatural beings, that it was absolutely unfit to be inhabited, and that the Baron's only reason for continuing there, was from a fear that if he left it, enquiries might be made concerning the strange appearances that had been observed, and which were no doubt such as he could not give a very clear account of, or he would hardly made such liberal gifts to those persons who had, as he pretended, given rise, by their idle fears, to the story.

These reports did not fail to give much affliction to the Baron, and greatly added to that melancholy which had but too visibly long been making inroads on his constitution.

Time had, however, by removing most of the old domestics and vassals, in a great measure buried the story in oblivion, and restored the Baron to a degree of composure which he had for some years been a stranger to ; yet it had not so totally destroyed the report, but what a very slight occasion was sufficient again to call it into action ; and that it might be certain to escape oblivion, such of the domestics who still remained, never failed to communicate the utmost of their knowledge, and frequently much beyond it, to all the younger branches of the household ; yet as they feared the Baron's displeasure, every one was equally careful to desire his confidant

to

to be sure to keep the secret, that he had not been able to keep himself.

Though by this means all were alike in possession of the secret, it had not for some years occasioned any disagreeable effect ; but, alas ! this tranquillity was not destined to be of long duration, for the misfortunes that happened on the night when the ladies kept watch in the castle for their brother, added to the recent very mysterious adventure in the North Gallery, had put every one so much off their guard, that, forgetful of every consequence, they seemed only to vie with each other who should relate the greatest number of the most terrifying circumstances, to prove the validity of their assertions.

These newly-revived alarms failed not ere long to reach the ear of the Baron, who did not fail to express his displeasure on the occasion ; but it was with much less con-

cern than it had been expected the intelligence would create ; and he contented himself with lamenting the credulity of people, who would not suffer themselves to be convinced, instead of depriving themselves and others of every enjoyment of life, by giving way to their own ill-grounded superstition.

The Baroneſs made no comments upon the occasion ; and the young ladies, much againſt their inclinations, felt themselves obliged to follow her example.

To the laſt obſervation of the Baron, Sir Raimond remarked that he believed he had miſtaken him, for he did not remember ever to have heard of the attempt he mentioned to convince them having been made ; and he thought if Lord Clarendon would permit the apartments to be inhabited, no more could poſſibly be thought or ſaid about a myſtery.

The

The Baron agreed to the remark, but gravely said that method could not be followed,—it was impossible.

“Permit then, my Lord,” said Walter, “that we open and explore them, and let all who feel any anxiety accompany us.”

“No, Walter, urge me no more, I cannot grant your request: I wish as much as yourself this mystery, so productive of disagreeable events, could be cleared;—but”

“Then can it be so too soon, my Lord?”

“Yes, Sir, it can; I told you so already; and rest assured it must not yet take place; the time of its disclosure may not be far off: there are circumstances that may indispensably require it, and rest assured you shall be present: Sir Raimond, too, will most probably be of the party; but now I command you to be silent

on a subject which you are not now to be told is disagreeable to me, and useless as to the end proposed."

Walter, however, nothing discouraged, still continued to urge his suit ; and Sir Raimond, though politeness would not permit him so openly to express his sentiments, felt no less curiosity. But the Baron was peremptory, and Walter was obliged at length, though with much reluctance, to desist ; but seldom accustomed to confine his thoughts long to the same subject, he soon met with attractions that served in a short time to put to flight all thoughts of the North Gallery.

Not so Sir Raimond, the more he saw, the more did there appear to excite his astonishment and curiosity ; yet never did he even for a moment harbour one sentiment injurious to the honor of the Baron : his heart was deeply impressed with veneration

ration for the memory of his parents : the Baron had been their chosen and most intimate friend and companion, which brought conviction to the mind of Raymond that he was honourable, and, exclusive of any other consideration, had he not been a second parent to himself and brother ; and was not he a still dearer name, was he not father to the beautiful Editha ? should he resign his long cherished hope of calling her his own, because the ignorant part of the world had charged the Baron with the commission of crimes at which he would have shuddered even to have thought ? what reason was there for these insinuations ? None. Lord Henry, on whom they had fixed for the hero of the tale, was now known to be living ; and if they had been so greatly in an error on the subject, might it not be possible their superstitious fears were totally without foundation.

There wanted no farther argument to convince Sir Raimond the whole was unfounded ; for Raimond was in love, and he wished not to listen to any thing that tended to counteract the wishes of his heart, and he determined to intreat the Baron immediately to bestow on him the hand of the only woman in the world with whom he could partake of happiness.

Not long did he delay to put in practice the resolution he had formed ; and his joy was completed, when he received from the Baron an answer favourable to his wishes.

“ But,” said the Baron, “ there are circumstances connected with my family, of which it is necessary you should be informed previous to any final determination being made with regard to this union, for they may possibly occasion a material change in your mind, and I will therefore request your company to-morrow evening for this explanation ;

explanation ; we will then have none present but our own family, all of whom I consider to be equally interested in what I intend to communicate ; yet as I know Editha would feel embarrassed on the occasion, if conscious it was on account of her approaching marriage, I must request she may not be made acquainted with our reasons."

He then left Sir Raimond, embarrassed and in deep meditation on his conduct (while he went to seek the Baroness, and acquaint her with his proposals). Lord Raimond was soon aroused from his reverie by the arrival of the younger branches of the family, and the rest of the evening was spent in the exercise of the bow and quiver, in the use of which they were well skilled, and at which amusement we will leave them for a time, to observe the transactions which were taking place in the family of Sir Arthur de Clare, who immediately on his arrival in

town paid his respects, accompanied by his wife, to the Lady Blanch Marly.

They found her, as she said, slowly recovering from a most severe attack of a consumption on a constitution naturally delicate: she apologized, and in good truth there appeared to be sufficient reason for having begged so great an indulgence as the sight of her guardian; and could never sufficiently express her acknowledgements to Lady de Clare for complying with the request of an invalid. But why, she added, need she be surprized at her kindness, it was a quality inseparable to the name of de Clare; all felt compassion for the weakness of a fellow creature, all but one (and here the tear of sensibility came to the relief of the unhappy maid) who, with much emotion, ventured at length to enquire after Albert, and at the same time to congratulate them, in broken accents, on his late happy marriage. They were astonished. Sir Arthur
knew

knew not of any marriage in which he was concerned ; if he was married, it was clandestinely, and never should have his approbation.

“ No, Sir Arthur,” said Lady de Clare, “ and if clandestinely transacted it should never meet with mine : but entertain not a thought so derogatory to the honour of your son ; for if Albert had intended to marry, nothing would have induced him to conceal his intentions ; and I am certain that he will never make any choice that will degrade his family.”

“ But, Madam, I should esteem it a very particular favour if you would inform us from whence you had your intelligence, and how long I have had the honour to possess a daughter.”

This was the very question for which the whole tale had been fabricated, and Lady

Blanch in secret applauded her own sagacity, that had thus, by alarming the maternal feelings of Lady de Clare, drawn her to make an enquiry which gave her so fair an opportunity of insinuating that this intelligence had caused her recent illness; for she was sensible that had she said so openly, Sir Arthur, though blinded by her duplicity, would never have overlooked such a want of delicacy: and she answered Lady de Clare, that she heard it reported by so many, that she was totally unable to mention any one in particular as being the author; and as to the time, she only remembered that it was one of the last things she heard previous to her indisposition; since when her intellects had been so much disordered, that she did not clearly remember any thing.

Unable to obtain any more satisfactory intelligence, Sir Arthur and his Lady took their leave, not without the former being
greatly

greatly impressed in favour of his ward, whose insinuations had so far taken effect as to cause a remark from Sir Arthur, that it was much to be lamented that Albert should obstinately continue blind to the many perfections Lady Blanch possessed; nor could he forbear regretting his misfortune in having so far relied on the obedience of his son, as to make proposals of an alliance which he began to fear it would never be in his power to fulfil.

Lady de Clare now took the opportunity to intimate to Sir Arthur her suspicions of her son's having previously resigned his heart to some more attractive female; to which cause perhaps might be attributed the reluctance with which he had received his commands.

Sir Arthur was resolute, perhaps in rather too great a degree, to every circumstance which he conceived concerned his honor;

honor ; and in the present instance felt himself strongly obligated to perform the promise he had given to his friend Lord Marly : he pitied Lady Blanch, who was, as he believed, falling a sacrifice to the too tender sentiment she entertained for Albert ; and as he never had the most distant reason to suppose him previously attached, he had often regarded him as one who possessed but little humanity, that could thus lightly treat the offer of an amiable heart, and one which he believed devoted to him and him alone. But well as Sir Arthur loved his honor, his son had an influence in his heart at least equally strong ; and the idea which had just been started by his Lady had almost staggered his resolution, with regard to his future conduct.

She saw the influence she had gained over him, and resolved to profit by that favourable circumstance ; and so well did she exert herself, as to obtain, ere they reached

reached home, a promise from Sir Arthur, "that should he on enquiry receive from Albert a satisfactory reason for avoiding this alliance, he would press him no further on the subject, as though the first wish of his heart had ever been to see it accomplished, he did not think his promise bound him to compel his son to act contrary to his wishes."

Highly elated at her success, Lady de Clare immediately on her arrival at home sought her son; he was not in his apartment, and she retired disappointed to the drawing-room, when, to her great astonishment, the first sounds that reached her was Albert enquiring after Lady Blanch, and listening with great apparent concern to the account his father was giving of her late severe indisposition.

This was one of those kind of occurrences which it was actually impossible to
account

honor; and in the present instance felt himself strongly obligated to perform the promise he had given to his friend Lord Marly: he pitied Lady Blanch, who was, as he believed, falling a sacrifice to the too tender sentiment she entertained for Albert; and as he never had the most distant reason to suppose him previously attached, he had often regarded him as one who possessed but little humanity, that could thus lightly treat the offer of an amiable heart, and one which he believed devoted to him and him alone. But well as Sir Arthur loved his honor, his son had an influence in his heart at least equally strong; and the idea which had just been started by his Lady had almost staggered his resolution, with regard to his future conduct.

She saw the influence she had gained over him, and resolved to profit by that favourable circumstance; and so well did she exert herself, as to obtain, ere they reached

reached home, a promise from Sir Arthur, "that should he on enquiry receive from Albert a satisfactory reason for avoiding this alliance, he would press him no further on the subject, as though the first wish of his heart had ever been to see it accomplished, he did not think his promise bound him to compel his son to act contrary to his wishes."

Highly elated at her success, Lady de Clare immediately on her arrival at home sought her son; he was not in his apartment, and she retired disappointed to the drawing-room, when, to her great astonishment, the first sounds that reached her was Albert enquiring after Lady Blanch, and listening with great apparent concern to the account his father was giving of her late severe indisposition.

This was one of those kind of occurrences which it was actually impossible to
account

account for, and Lady de Clare wisely determined not to make the attempt, but rested contented in believing he made the enquiry in mere compliance with his father's humour; yet she could scarce think it so, for it was no part of Albert's character to appear what he was not to please any one.

It had been the intention of Sir Arthur when he left Lady Blanch to desire the attendance of his son, on his next visit to her; but uncertain of obtaining his acquiescence, he had forbore to mention to her the slightest idea on the subject, fearful of raising expectations, and rewarding them with disappointment; for Sir Arthur was determined on believing that Lady Blanche was really

“Lost in love, oppress'd with grief.”

These his wishes he had, however, in compliance with Lady de Clare, consented to
give

give up, and not a syllable on the subject had he suffered to escape his lips : how great then must have been his astonishment, and how much more that of Lady de Clare, when she heard her son express his desire to be permitted to wait on Lady Blanch, and propose to put it in practice, at no greater distance than on the following morning.

Sir Arthur flattering himself that his Lady had been mistaken, readily assented to a proposal so perfectly in unison with the wishes of his heart ; yet he declared that if his son felt an attachment to any other lady, on no consideration would he consent to his visiting Lady Blanch.

Albert readily assured him there did not exist the least impediment of that nature ; it was true, he acknowledged, there was a lady to whom his heart had been firmly and sincerely attached, even from infancy ; and he candidly acknowledged, that while the
least

least hope remained of calling her his, he should have felt the utmost repugnance to forming any other engagement; but as every possibility of that long-cherished hope was now vanished for ever, the next wish of his heart was to comply with his father's commands.

Sir Arthur was delighted, on any terms, to carry his point; and though his own wishes had evidently held but the second place in his son's consideration, he was well contented to overlook that want of ceremony. He was too well acquainted with Albert's heart to fear his treating with unkindness the woman who was destined to be his wife, even though she was not so fortunate as to be the object of his choice; and he undertook with pleasure to introduce him, where he doubted not he would be received with satisfaction.

Lady

Lady de Clare took the earliest opportunity to enquire into the motives of a resolution which appeared in her eyes absolutely incomprehensible; that Albert, who had always been averse to this marriage, who had done every thing in his power to delay and prevent it, should now, unasked, voluntarily propose a measure which must inevitably lead to its immediate conclusion was scarcely to be credited; and Albert, on her desiring to know if he was sincere, confirmed it all, nor betrayed in the least, either by word or look, any emotion tending to create an idea to the contrary.

Lady de Clare could say no more, if Albert, whom she always thought entertained the strongest repugnance to the marriage; if he no longer disapproved of it, she could not possibly object to it: the subject was therefore dropt, and he was introduced on the following morning to the Lady Blanch, who received him with apparent pleasure; every

every one regarded it as a connexion that was certainly to take place almost immediately, and preparations were soon after begun for the celebration of their nuptials, in which employment we will leave the noble family, and proceed to give an explanation of that which appears to be the unaccountable determination of young de Clare.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

PREVIOUS to his leaving Clarendon, in compliance with his father's commands, he marked with a jealous eye the attentions that, in defiance of his attempts to conceal it, would sometimes involuntarily appear in the behaviour of Sir Raimond Fitzalwin ; nor was this all, he had not failed also to observe that these attentions met not that cool reception from Editha, which is generally their reward from a heart that feels for the bestower no warmer sentiment than that of friendship ; and these observations

observations were soon confirmed by his soon after receiving a letter from Walter, in which he mentioned the proposals made by Raimond to the Baron, and his own ideas of the favourable reception they were likely to meet with from Editha and his illustrious parents; nor did he himself appear to entertain any other than the most cordial approbation of his suit, and wishes for his success. This unwelcome, though certainly not unexpected intelligence, had just been strengthened by a second letter on the same subject, on the morning that Sir Arthur and Lady de Clare returned from visiting Lady Blanch. The idea of Editha being on the eve of a marriage, which under such circumstances it was impossible to prevent, had almost determined him to marry, in hopes of banishing from his bosom wishes which he now saw could never be gratified; besides he flattered himself, that even if he had been so unguarded as to have suffered his

his love to appear, his immediate marriage with another would convince them that they had been mistaken, and he wished for nothing so much as keeping that a secret; yet he perceived not that *very* ambiguity had most probably lost him the maid he loved.

At this crisis arrived Sir Arthur; and on Albert enquiring after Lady Blanch, gave so moving an account of her declining health, as failed not to interest the feeling heart of Albert.

She was ill; might it not, without vanity, be supposed it was in his power to remove that illness: his father had intimated that she beheld him with emotions far from indifferent, and it might be her pride, if not her love, was wounded by his neglect; it was become his duty to banish from his heart every trace of the too lovely Editha Clarendon: and how could he accomplish

plish this so well as in the society of a beautiful woman, whose every wish would be to make him happy? Should he not be in reality happier in such a connexion, than in a union with one who entertained for him nothing but esteem? These reasons soon determined him how to act; and when he had once resolved in doing what he believed right, it was no trivial argument that could induce him to forego his resolutions.

The arrangements in the de Clare family did not fail to excite some very opposite sentiments at Clarendon.

The Baroness rejoiced that her nephew had conquered his attachment to her daughter; and Editha sincerely, though in secret, joined in the same sentiment; for she had found that esteem was all she had to bestow on Albert; and it was no part of her felicity to reckon the number of admirers; her charms

charms might hold in bondage, when she considered it was not in her power to restore the happiness she had deprived them of, yet now and then she could not help lamenting that he had not made choice of a more amiable woman; for she was not unacquainted with Lady Blanch, and was clearly convinced she never could make Albert happy.

Walter approved not of this marriage: he flattered himself that he did not stand low in the good opinion of his uncle, Sir Arthur; and as his heart was not a little addicted to avarice, he entertained some ideas of offering himself to Lady Blanch, not doubting in the least of being accepted, for that is, I verily believe, an idea that never entered into the head of any young gentleman in existence; and he therefore gave it as his decided opinion, that Albert was a foolish fellow for complying with the whims of his absurd father.

VOL. II.

D

When

When the evening came on which the Baron had promised to make Sir Raimond acquainted with the history of the haunted gallery, he was, by a painful reason, obliged to defer giving him the pleasure he had promised : this was occasioned by the severe indisposition of the Baroness ; and danger banished every other thought from his family.

She was now, however, happily recovered ; and one night, when no visitor remained at the castle but Sir Raimond and Edgar, who were indeed considered as sons of the family, the Baron, agreeable to his promise, thus began his narrative :

“ I must,” said he, “ in order to make myself clearly understood, trouble you to accompany me back to the earlier part of my life : it is certainly an unreasonable request ; but when I was as young as yourselves,

selfes, I should, in search of what excited my curiosity, have taken twice that pains.

“ It is now about twenty-seven years since I was united to the Baroness : we were not then in possession of this castle ; and my father, the Earl of Dunbayne, had appropriated for our residence the Castle of Dunbayne, a seat which he then possessed in the neighbourhood of Newcastle.

“ At about the distance of six years from our first residing there, a dissention broke out between this country and the kingdom of Scotland : the nobility of both kingdoms made immediate preparations for the defence of their domains ; nor was the Castle of Dunbayne one of the few that was left in a defenceless ; state on the first alarm, I assembled my clans : they were not few in number ; and, if estimated by their courage and attachment, they were a host. In a short time I found myself sur-

rounded with six hundred men in arms, a part of whom were always retained within the castle walls. When times were such as to cause frequent and sudden interruptions from the neighbouring enemy, that number was very considerably increased ; and the rest of the forces were throughout the domains, ready to obey the call of the trumpet in the hour of danger.

“ I am sensible,” continued the Baron, “ that to the active ideas of ardent youth my conduct may appear too cool, inspired as your bosoms are with sentiments of valour, you will be astonished why, in the prime of youth, with a numerous train of followers, warmly attached to the interests of our house, I should adopt a conduct so inactive, when I might have been so much better employed in the actual service of my country ; nor in this idea are you alone : so thought the Earl my father ; but the reason of this material difference of opinion will

will be easily comprehended, when you shall know the interest my father felt for him whom he had acknowledged for his Sovereign, was not felt by me. Yet suspect me not of disloyalty. No, far, very far was disloyalty from the heart of Clarendon. But I regarded Bolingbroke as an usurper; and if to that name addition of guilt can be added, he had incurred it by his treachery to his royal and unfortunate kinsman King Richard: for this my soul disdained him; and though, in compliance with Lord Dunbayne's wishes, I forbore openly to defy him, I ever made myself and family a stranger to the presence of Henry. There was indeed no inducement to hold out against them: the luckless Richard was now no more; and as he left no children, and Henry was in possession of the throne, there was nothing farther left to contend for.

“ In the present dispute with Scotland, the cause had evidently, at least in my opi-

nion, originated in the faithless conduct of King Henry, who had infringed some treaties of importance made between the two kingdoms in the reign of our illustrious Sovereign Edward III.

“ Clearly convinced of this, and hating Henry, I determined never to take up arms in his service ; yet as the people had not been to blame, and were likely to be great sufferers from the inroads of the enemy, I thought it my duty to hold my clans in readiness to defend the peasantry, should it be attacked.

“ It was not long that I was suffered to remain in inactivity : a numerous band, headed by Malcolm, the youthful Lord of Alva, heir of the noble house of Balmane, encamped within a mile to the left of the castle, and immediately in the main road leading to it, by that means intending to prevent all communication between the
forces

forces within the walls, and such of our military forces as were posted on the outskirts of the forest.

“ Their approach during the night had been so secret, that they had passed the outposts ere they had time to give the appointed signal ; and it was not till the rays of the rising sun played on their arms that I discovered the position of the enemy.

“ It was, however, necessary that they should be dislodged without delay, for the Barones was absent from the castle, and her arrival hourly expected ; by no other road but that obstructed by the enemy, could she possibly pass to the castle.

“ When the first rumours of the incursions made by the Scots began to call for the serious attention of the English Barons, we were on a visit at the mansion of the Earl of Dunbayne, from whence I imme-

diately returned to Newcastle for its defence ; but the Baroness was not the partner of my journey.

“ I had at that time a sister, who, from the early loss of the Countess my mother, had received her education at the convent of St. Agnes, in the Isle of Man ; and as she was now of an age to quit her retirement, the Earl had, at our repeated intreaties, consented to her accompanying us to Newcastle ; and as my presence there was absolutely necessary, the Baroness undertook herself to be the messenger of this welcome intelligence, and went alone.

“ ’Twas true, I had appointed a party of our vassals to attend her when on the coast ; but from the number of Lord Alva’s bands, I feared they would be inadequate to her protection ; and indeed it was more than probable they might have been, being
but

but a small number driven from their post.

“ The watch guns were fired, my tenants obeyed the signal, and all that could effect their way through the forest joined me in arms : the trumpets sounded from the battlements defiance to the enemy, and the courts wore the appearance of a determined and regular attack ; when a messenger arrived from the camp of Lord Alva : he sounded the horn before the gates of the castle, and demanded safe conduct to my presence. I complied, and sent forth one of the chief of my knights as hostage for his safety ; but, Holy Mary, what was my agitation, when I learnt that all I had feared was already verified—the Barons and Constance were prisoners to Lord Alva.

“ If,” said I, “ thy message goes no further, you may return ; I have no answer to thy master but such as my brave followers

D 5

shall

shall announce the hour that we meet in yonder plain; that hour gives liberty to his captives, or death to me."

"My noble Lord," returned the youth, "knows not the generous heart of the Lord of Alva. 'Tis true the ladies were his captives, but they are so no more, soon will they reach the castle gates in safety: a chosen party of our horse, led by the noble Malcolm, now leads them hither; and, in return for the protection he affords to them, he claims your promise for his safe return; that promise once obtained, I haste to join them—he asks the truce no longer than the ladies are in safety, nor will he shun thy arm in battle. But Malcolm, of Alva, was not in the presence of a female."

To say how much I was struck with admiration at the generous conduct of Lord Alva is impossible. I delayed not a moment to pass my sacred promise for his safety,

ty, and I waited their arrival with impatience.

Followers

“It was not long ere I beheld them slowly approaching towards the castle, and I descended with haste into the court to return my thanks to their noble conductor for his generosity. But Malcolm was alike in all his actions; and while his followers halted round the gates of the castle, to make room for the Baroness to enter, he bowed respectfully to her and Constance, and, retiring into the midst of a small party of his followers, instantly began his march back to the camp.

“To fight with such an enemy was impossible; honor, gratitude, every thing conspired to forbid the sordid thought, and I was determined to act only on the defensive. But in this pacific disposition I was not long suffered to continue; for ere the close of the second evening after, I was

D 6

informed

informed by his herald that it was the intention of Lord Alva to give battle on the morrow.

“ Gratitude, though meritorious, might have incurred the imputation of cowardice, had I declined the fight, and I therefore returned the defiance, though, I must confess, it was with great reluctance; and before the morning sun arose in the horizon, we sallied from the castle, while every heart beat high with the hopes of victory.

“ The battle was obstinately supported on both sides, and long was conquest doubtful: innumerable were the acts of valour and generosity; for we forgot not our obligations to Lord Alva, and our conduct produced a return of the same.

“ In the heat of the engagement the main body of the Scots gave way, and a sudden

sudden retreat was evidently the object of their intentions.

“ I was then engaged in a distant part of the field, and my astonishment at the rout I observed was the greater, as to my knowledge that part of the forces was led by Lord Alva.

“ I immediately marched my troops to the assistance of those who were every where to be seen, in eager pursuit of the retiring Scots, who were passing near our standard.

“ I was soon informed that Lord Alva was a prisoner : an arrow-shot from one of our archers had pierced him in the right arm at the moment his charger, madd with the pain of many wounds he had received, had thrown his rider ; a party of my vassals had surrounded him, and totally unable to defend, he had been obliged to yield himself their prisoner.

“ He

“ He was immediately conveyed to Dunbayne castle, whither, as the contest was by this accident perfectly decided, I followed him soon after. The greatest part of my followers were still in pursuit of the enemy, as it was necessary to chase them, if possible, from the neighbourhood, and prevent them from forming again into a body ; and a very small part of my vassals were employed on duty within the castle walls.

“ The Baroness was no sooner acquainted with the situation of Lord Alva, than, forgetting the enemy in him who had treated her so nobly, she determined herself to become his nurse ; nor did my lovely sister, the fair but hapless Constance, appear less anxious to discharge their mutual debt of gratitude.

“ The young Lord was, by their care, soon out of danger ; and as civility produced a return, he soon began to associate

ciate with our little party on the most friendly terms ; and we became so attached to each other's society, that he who came to the castle as my prisoner, now continued as my guest.

“ We had spent about a month in this manner, when we were suddenly called to arms one night by the watch guns of the centinels ; an enemy as unknown as unexpected, had attempted to scale the walls in secret, and had in some measure been successful.

“ Alva forgot he ever was my foe : he was accoutred, and in the court marshalling my men, even before myself. With all the speed I could I joined him. Already we had more than equal numbers to engage ; but the valour of my young friend was invincible : he was every where to be seen strewing havoc and desolation around him, and let me hope, where all he held most dear
was

was in danger, that the arm of Clarendon was not idle ; yet little had it availed its master, had it not been for the timely aid of Malcolm ; and though too cruelly he afterwards betrayed my unsuspecting faith, yet shall my tongue do justice to his deeds.

“ I was engaged with the leader of our invaders, and victory, after a hard fought battle, seemed inclined to favour me ; but my adversary, who forgot, or who perhaps never felt that the honor of a soldier is lost when he takes odds against his antagonist, called loudly for assistance, and he called not in vain. One of his vassals, who preferred the safety of his Lord to his own honour, raised high the brandished sword above my head, at a moment in which I was too deeply engaged with his ignoble master, to observe him ; then had I fallen by a villain's hand, had not my noble friend arrived to aid me : he saw the weapon threatening

threatening death ; and in the moment of its descent he seized the coward's arm, and with his own sabre struck him to the heart.

" Now, my brave friends," he cried, " strike home ; you fight not with a generous foe, but with a band of assassins, whose only aim is the life of your lord : " like fascination did his words operate on the senses of his hearers ; they did indeed strike home, they fought like men who fight for death or victory.

" Conquest crowned our hopes : our foes, such as could effect their escape, fled the castle ; and the greater part unable, though not unwilling, to follow the example of their companions, remained our captives, and amongst the number was Allan, Earl of Allanbank, the inglorious leader of this clandestine and unmanly attack : he had heard how we defeated the followers of
Lord

Lord Alva in our late engagement, and flattered himself with the hope of finding us elated with success and lulled into security, and too deficient in courage to attempt an open attack ; yet desirous of signalizing himself in arms, he was persuaded he should find in us that which best suited his disposition, an easy conquest.

“ He was for the remainder of the night conducted to an apartment in one of the towers, from whence it was impossible he should effect his escape ; and on the ensuing day demanded an audience of me, which I complied with.

“ His deportment was haughty and unconciliatory : he hesitated not to avow his disgraceful enterprize, and that the utmost of his endeavours should be still directed to the same purpose the moment he was at liberty : “ for,” added he, “ I had no motive for visiting your house more than that

I have

I have to all your countrymen ; but I have now the desire of revenge."

" He concluded by demanding the price of his ransom ; and as his actions had not deserved it, I affected not to treat him with liberality, I named the terms ; to which he assented by a fullen inclination of his head, and desired to be reconducted to his prison.

" You have none, my Lord," I replied, " more confined than the boundaries of this castle ; as far as that extends, you will oblige me by considering yourself at liberty to use your pleasure."

" He appeared not insensible that small as this favour was he had not merited it ; but he chose not to acknowledge it, and was on the point of quitting the apartment when Malcolm entered it. Lord Allankbank regarded him a while with a contemptuous look ; at last addressing himself to me, " My Lord," said he, " this gentleman,

man, I suppose, is your prisoner also ?'

" I answered he was not : fortune had once given me an advantage, which I had the happiness to make double in gaining Lord Alva for a friend."

" I thought indeed," replied Lord Allanbank, " it was Lord Alva ; but that he should wield his sword in the cause of the enemy of Scotland, sinks him beneath my notice ; I know him no longer."

And he replied, " Malcolm will consider that as the only obligation you can offer that he will not refuse ; and ever must Lord Alva consider it as a disgrace that he has been acquainted with one who scruples not to assume the character of a coward."

" The answer of Lord Allanbank was not less severe, though less merited ; and I knew not when the dispute would end. I took every opportunity my power afford-

ed

ed to put a period to a conversation equally warm on both sides, but inefficient were my arguments ; and a challenge to decide their quarrel by single combat was given and received with equal disdain and hauteur on both sides.

“ The situation of Lord Allanbank was a total impossibility to its being immediately decided ; but the delay did not by any means appear to decrease their mutual animosity.

“ During his stay at the castle, it was impossible that Lord Allanbank should not sometimes meet with my sister ; for though he at first totally estranged himself from our society, he frequently met her in her rambles about the castle ; but his aspect had excited in her gentle bosom no sentiments but those of fear and dislike of his ferocity.

“ Different,

“ Different, very different from these were the emotions she occasioned in his bosom.

“ On the first of his residence amongst us he had expressed nothing but contempt and hatred for every thing around him, and considered every hour an age till the ransom could arrive, that was to free him from a roof he scorned ; but no longer was this the object of his wishes, no longer did he think the messenger tardy whom he had so often threatened with death for his delay : he now courted our company : he was polite and attentive, nay even agreeable : he spoke not of his departure, though we were certain he had long since heard from Scotland, and his disposition was not such as to warrant a supposition of his vassals daring to disobey his commands ; and Lord Albank seemed to have lost with his liberty not only every desire to regain it, but even to have changed his disposition.

“ The

"The Barones soon found reason to impute this extraordinary alteration to the attractions of Constance; and fearful for her happiness, should she unfortunately bestow her hand on one whom we had such indisputable cause to think unworthy of her, we proposed, without acquainting her with the motive, that she should return into Kent to the Earl of Dunbayne, who, desirous of seeing an only daughter of whose society he had been long deprived, had really desired her return might be fixed for an early period. But this proposal did not by any means meet the approbation of Constance; and her earnest desire to continue at Newcastle did but confirm our fears, that she already too much approved the attentions which it was evident Lord Allanbank paid to her.

"The rumour of her leaving us was not so secret, though the cause was unknown only to the Barones and myself, as not to produce

produce some singular effects that I had not expected.

“ Lord Allanbank soon after informed me that his ransom was arrived ; but readily accepted my offer of remaining at Dunbayne Castle till it was agreeable to depart. “ If,” said he, “ my Lord, I continue till it is agreeable to depart, I fear you will be long incommoded with my company ; for continued he, smiling, there is but one thing can make my departure pleasing to me.” His words I did not clearly comprehend, and much less his pleasantry ; but imputed it to the happiness every man feels at the approach of a long lost blessing ; for pleasantry was not a part of the character of Lord Allanbank : I thought I could perceive in his manner that there was something he wished to communicate. But the entrance of Lord Alva put a stop to our conversation, and to his extraordinary good
good

good humour, which vanished almost in the same instant.

“ This was surely, I thought, a morning of transformation ; for Malcolm, who was always chearful and good humoured, was now so reserved and unfociable, and seemed to look on Lord Allanbank with such reserve and suspicion, that I much wished they had never met.

“ Since Lord Allanbank had changed his temper, they appeared to have forgot much of their former animosity ; and had it not been for the uncommon good humour of Lord Alva, I should have suspected, from his behaviour, that he designed to provoke a quarrel.

“ At length, to the great relief of Lord Alva, a domestic informed Allanbank his horses were in waiting ; and he took his

VOL. II. E leave,

leave, telling me he should not be long absent.

“ When he had left the apartment, I could not help remarking the alteration of his manners : in the course of the conversation mentioned his ambiguous expressions, relative to his resolution of leaving Dunbayne Castle. The brow of Malcolm was clouded with discontent. “ You have lost,” said he, “ your usual discrimination, my Lord, or you could not fail to perceive the meaning of Lord Allanbank points to your lovely sister : she is the attraction that detains him here, and her society that blessing which can alone make his return to Scotland agreeable ; but I conjure you, Lovel, if you regard the happiness of Lord Alva, give not forever from his hopes all that can make him happy. Long have I loved your sister, long has that love made me a truant to my native home, and kept me here a slave, who did not even feel one wish

with for freedom. Let not my friend suspect me of unkindness, when I own it is not him alone that has detained me here. Oh! Clarendon, long have I wished, but dared not trust you with the secret: but I feared that national prejudice might steel your heart against my suit; yet if you can so far forget it, give me your interest with the too lovely Constance."

"I told he had no opposition to apprehend from me: he was in ecstasies: a thousand times he thanked me, and seemed no longer to entertain a doubt of being happy.

"From this dream I was, however, obliged to rouse my too ardent companion, by telling him that he had forgot that not mine, but Lord Dunbayne's approbation must decide the event: "but," added I, "there can, I think, be little cause to doubt; for to whom can he with more pleasure resign the future protection of his

daughter, than to him to whom he is indebted for the life of his son.

“ I ask not for compliments, my Lord, my heart is interested, and I ask for a reward. Then as I have nothing to bestow worthy your acceptance, I must endeavour to make my sister pay my debts.”

“ The chearful smile that resumed its wonted station on the brow of Malcolm convinced me he was happy, and after a short time we went to seek the ladies.

“ We found the Baroness and Constance busily employed in embroidering a vest for Walter, in which he was to make his first appearance on his ensuing birth-day. Lady Clarendon proposed a walk, and we left Constance, as was frequently the case, to be entertained by Malcom till our return: nor did we drop the most distant hint of his wishes; for I well knew that had she suspected

suspected their tendency, she would not easily have been prevailed on to stay.

“ We had not been absent above half an hour before we were joined by them ; and the joy that sparkled in the eyes of Malcolm convinced me that his suit had not experienced an unfavourable reception. The Baroness and myself in secret rejoiced at the discovery, not only on account of our friend, but from the pleasure we felt in finding we had been mistaken in the object of her attachment. My sister soon left us, and taking the arm of the Baroness, they struck into one of the woods, and were soon out of sight, leaving Malcolm to inform me of his success, and from whom I soon learnt that his mistress had made no very strong opposition to his hopes, except that she did not chuse to hear him till his addresses had received my sanction ; for Constance was above coquetry : she loved Lord Alva,

and was conscious of no reason why she should deny it.

“ Malcolm was now again all joy and happiness ; and while he enjoyed the approving smiles of his fair mistress, he seemed to forget there was a world beyond the walls of Clarendon. From this state of enviable felicity it was, however, necessary to rouse him. That he possessed the good opinion of myself and Lady Clarendon was not sufficient, the consent of my father, Lord Dunbayne, was indispensably necessary ; and in a few days he took a reluctant leave of the castle, though it was rendered less so by the fascinating hope of soon returning to receive the hand of Constance.

“ Scarce was he departed, when I received from my Lord Allanbank proposals of a similar tendency : “ he had,” he said, “ long suspected that it was the intention of

of the Lord Alva to address the Lady Constance, and as he wished not to subject himself to the possibility of a refusal, he had determined to be silent on the subject; but as the recent departure of his Lordship had led him to suppose he might have been mistaken, he could not help flattering himself with the hope of meeting with my approbation; and concluded by acknowledging, that it had been the force of his attachment that had so long detained him a willing captive: he lamented the former ferocity of his deportment, and wished me to believe it was occasioned by the mortification he felt at the indelible disgrace that he conceived he had incurred in being vanquished in the fight.

“ I believed as much of his excuse, as I had found reason in his conduct to authorise; but as I wished, if possible, to part with him on good terms, I appeared satisfied, and contented myself with informing

E 4

him

him briefly of the suit of Malcolm, and of its good reception from my sister. Still, however, though his pride appeared greatly mortified at the preference shewn to his rival, he persisted in his solicitations to hear from the lips of Constance his future fate. I felt that to permit him to address her was a breach of faith to Malcolm; but as I had a sincere belief of her constant adherence to a promise once given, I determined to introduce him to her, not doubting but that when once he had heard her determination, he would drop all further pretensions to her favor. In this idea I was, however, deceived; for after a long conference, in which he met with nothing but the most positive, though polite refusal: he again sought me take his final leave; when he repeated, that though Lady Constance had certainly been very candid in her conduct, he could not help flattering himself that time might make an alteration in her sentiments greatly in his favor; or at least, though

though they might possibly remain unalterable, her decisions, somewhat perhaps too hastily adopted, might not be destined to experience the same immutability ; but as that was a blessing not yet to be expected, he intended immediately to depart for Scotland.

“ I heard his determination with pleasure, for Lord Allanbank was a man from whose acquaintance I ever turned with secret disgust ; yet how he could possibly expect any favorable alteration to take place in the sentiments of Constance during his absence, I did not so clearly comprehend, or wish to enquire, as it was certainly desirable to say as little as possible on the subject ; and perhaps many a one, considering his numerous disagreeable qualifications, will think he acted wisely, if he imagined that his absence would be the most acceptable favour he could confer : for my part, I could not then have believed any man

capable of condescending to practise the despicable artifices which he some time after adopted, in order to gratify his boundless revenge.

“ Not many hours after we had the pleasure to see him pass the draw-bridge, followed by such of his vassals as had shared in his captivity : he looked towards the castle as he passed through the court, and respectfully, though somewhat haughtily, saluting the ladies who were on the terrace, he passed out at the gate. The banners of Allanbank were once more unfurled before him, and was the signal for the approach of a numerous train of his followers, who had waited for his coming forth upon the plain to join the cavalcade, at the head of which he departed from the borders of Cumberland.

“ We had now no wish ungratified, but for the return of Malcolm ; nor was that long

long delayed : he arrived after an absence of three weeks, but melancholy clouded the brow where mirth and happiness had before reigned triumphant ; and too soon we found that it originated in the disapprobation of the Earl of Dunbayne to his proposals : his objections were, in my opinion, founded on too weak a reason to be worthy of the decision ; and that the happiness of two individuals, who were so justly esteemed, might not be marred, while any thing in my power could possibly prevent it, I determined to pay a visit to my father, and endeavour to gain his consent to our united wishes.

Lionel
“ Accordingly I directly bent my way to his residence, at Huntingdon, where he then was, and left Lord Alva in the command of the castle and followers ; the protection of the Baroness and my sister I was also well contented to resign to one

whose inclination was ably supported both by courage and ability.

“ On arriving at Huntingdon, I found the Earl, as I expected, fixed on refusing his consent, yet hope led me to believe he might yield to conviction ; but hope had flattered me into a delusive dream : the merits of Lord Alva certainly held a very different degree in our opinions. My father, who had ever been a zealous supporter of the cause of Bolingbroke, every nobleman who ventured to contend with him was undeserving, and this Lord Alva had dared to do repeatedly ; a conduct that certainly rendered him the more amiable in my opinion, as a similitude of sentiment will most undoubtedly never fail to endear the possessors to each other. But, exclusive of private feeling, Lord Alva had certainly acted as his duty as a subject required. Henry had repeatedly infringed on the rights of the King of Scotland ; and
he

he took up arms in defence of his undoubted sovereign, against one who, however succeeding years might confirm in his throne, was then indisputably an usurper of another's birth-right.

“ 'Twas true also that he had fought against my native country; but in so just a quarrel I should certainly have done the same. The Earl, however, either could or would not be of my opinion, or acknowledge that his conduct was actuated by party prejudice: as the preserver of my life, he owned himself unwillingly under obligations to Lord Alva, for his heart told him he was ungrateful; but he could not give a daughter of the House of Dunbayne to an enemy of Henry of Lancaster.

“ As my endeavours were destined to be unsuccessful, I prepared for my return to Newcastle; and never before had so unpleasant an hour been passed by the Earl
and

and myself in the company of each other : for I candidly acknowledge, that, exclusive of the interest I felt in the cause of Lord Alva, I was mortified at the indifference which my father appeared to feel for my preservation ; nor could I endure the reflections that Malcolm must make on my family, however the generosity of his heart might induce him to conceal them : nor did the Earl appear to be a stranger to the same sentiments ; for though he was evidently under constraint in my society, still would he form pretences to delay my leaving him. At the conclusion of the third day I took my leave of Huntingdon, and, for the first time, wished, when I beheld my home, that my return could be delayed.

“ My expedition had induced my beloved friends to hope I came with joyful tidings ; but, alas ! too soon did the pleasure

sure that beamed in their eyes at my approach gave place to sadness.

“ I remarked to the Baroness the uncommon and settled melancholy that appeared to have taken possession of the heart of Malcolm : she told me she had long observed it ; and though the strength of his attachment was indisputable, she did not think it was entirely on that account ; since the time I had left the castle he had received frequent messengers from Scotland : he at first appeared happy at the intelligence they conveyed to him ; and often said, that if the Earl of Dunbayne could be brought to entertain the sentiments of Lord Balmoro, his felicity would be certain : he had of late appeared less happy than usual : in the presence of Constance he was all gaiety and cheerfulness ; but when the Baroness and she happened to be engaged in conversation, they frequently observed him pace the room with quick and unequal steps,
and

and speak to himself with energy : he always when noticed avoided any explanation, and only hinted that he must for a short time visit Scotland at my return ; but never assigned his reasons even to Constance, who was on all other occasions high in his confidence.

“ About a week after my return a messenger arrived to Malcolm from Scotland ; in less than ten minutes he entered my apartment : “ My Lord,” said he, “ I come unwillingly to tell you I must leave !”—“ Leave me, Malcolm ! leave me so suddenly ! may I be acquainted with the cause ?”—“ The cause,” he said, “ is inevitable ; you will find it in this letter. Oh ! Constance, must I leave you, you whom I fondly hoped to present to the admiring kinsmen of my house ; must I forego that long, that dearly cherished hope, and leave you, to become the wretched wife of the accursed Allanbank ?”

“ Never,”

“Never,” said I, as I started from my seat at the sentence, “no, never, Malcolm, shall the hand of Constance be given to the man you name. Ah ! Lovel, you speak from the feelings of your own heart ; you are a stranger even to the idea of compulsion”—“Compulsion, Malcolm, never shall be made use of.” Should it be possible for the Earl my father (whom heaven is my witness I think better of than to believe would act so unjust) be induced to exercise unjust authority, my sister shall become my daughter : I will protect her from one who will then forfeit all claims to her obedience.

“Dear Lovel,” returned he, “the little portion of happiness that can inhabit the breast of Malcolm you have restored : my departure cannot be delayed : I were indeed unworthy of her love, could I entertain such an idea ; but be you her protector, keep her from an alliance with any
other,

other, and time, perhaps, may change the sentiments of her too rigid father."

"The Earl of Balmano had sent to require the presence of his son at the castle: he had twice been attacked by an unknown and formidable enemy, of whose speedy return, though twice repulsed, they entertained no doubt: his clans were summoned, and nearly in readiness; but age and infirmity rendered the Earl unable to continue their leader, and to the arm of the youthful Malcolm he purposed to resign the command of his followers.

"Malcolm was like many other people, who, receiving some little portion of comfort in their afflictions, first think their sorrows are all at an end, and in an hour after sigh for something more; for he had scarce ceased to thank me for the good offices I had already promised him, ere he preferred another, and a much more serious request:
he

he besought me even with tears to consent to his marriage being privately solemnized before he left the castle ; for he flattered himself that the partiality of the Earl to Constance would soon induce him to pardon such a step : his objections to him were not personal, but merely founded on his political principles ; and on that subject he determined, though he could not join him, at least to oppose him no longer, by taking any active part against the interests of Henry.

“ To this proposal how could I well object ; I was myself too happy with the woman of my choice, to oppose with much resolution the happiness of two beloved friends, whose future felicity depended on each other : I saw them on the brink of misery, merely through caprice, and saw that I could save them ; and I yielded to the entreaties of Malcolm more from pity than from a conviction that I was acting right ;

right ; for certainly in the disposal of Constance, the pleasure of herself and my father should alone have been consulted.

“ I, however, convinced him that it would be better to let her remain with us till his return, and with much difficulty prevailed on him to delay the marriage till that time, when I solemnly promised to resign her to his future protection, and wait for some favorable opportunity to make the discovery to the Earl of Dunbayne, till when it was proposed to keep it secret from every inhabitant of the castle, except the Father Austin. Alas ! continued the Baron, how anxiously did I endeavour to gain Malcolm to my opinion ; and with what reluctance did he yield to my arguments, fatal arguments, that failed not to involve in endless misery my unhappy family.

“ In the space of about two months he returned to us ; but dejection was still, if possible,

possible, more strongly depicted on his face. To my enquiries concerning his father, he answered, that the Earl was better than he had been, and his enemies no more. A deep sigh accompanied the latter part of his words, which I need not say I found a difficulty in comprehending. "Does Malcolm grieve," said I, "that the enemies of his house are vanquished?"—"I do sincerely, my Lovel."—"I do not understand you; but, perhaps, when you have said all you are thinking of to Constance, a rational friend will find you something more comprehensible."

"At the mention of her name he changed colour, and, with some embarrassment, enquired if she was still at the castle. "Could you think me, Malcolm, so regardless of my friend's happiness, and my own honour, as to break my word, and let her go before your return? though, trust me, had it been long delayed, I should
have

have found some difficulty to encounter in the performance of my promise; for yesterday brought a mandate from the Earl for her immediate return."—"Know you the reason of that order, Lovel? Does he suspect?"—"No, trust me, it is, I fear, a still more serious business; no other, as I understand, than a proposal of marriage from the Lord of Allanbank."

"Curse on his name," said Malcolm. "But tell me," he continued, with emotion, "what reception does his suit meet from the Earl of Dunbayne?"

"I fear, my Lord, he does not encounter his discouragement; though knowing my sentiments, he has not condescended to explain his."

"The agitation of Lord Alva was beyond description; his face was the picture of despair and frenzy. But I knew the impetuosity

petuosity of his disposition, and imputed to nothing more than a momentary impulse of passion and contempt.

“ He was about to speak, when the door was gently opened, and the Baroness entered the apartment, followed by the blushing Constance, on their return from their evening’s walk : they had heard of his arrival at the castle, and the Baroness came to welcome her guest ; nor could politeness, or we may perhaps say inclination, permit her fair companion to leave her.

“ At the appearance of his future bride, every trace of discontent was banished from the brow of the happy Malcolm ; passion was no more, and every unpleasing recollection seemed forgotten, while he contemplated the enchanting smiles of his fair and gentle mistress. He entreated me for the performance of my promise, and begged the marriage might take place that evening.

Constance

Constance objected to so much haste : she trembled too at the thoughts of her father's displeasure. But on the Baroness remarking that should Lord Dunbayne disapprove of the refusal she had sent to Lord Allank's offer, and insist on her return, she would probably be obliged to submit she ceased to object ; and Malcolm uttering a curse on his name, which even the presence of the ladies could not restrain, he took the hand of his fair bride, and followed the Baroness through a secret passage to the chapel of the castle, whither I soon after conducted the good Austin ; and with no other company present did Malcolm receive the hand of Constance of Dunbayne.

“ In about three weeks time we received an invitation from Lord Dunbayne to visit him with Constance, who he wished to return as he had heard she was not well ; and she had now been some months absent from him : indeed since the loss of Lady Dunbayne,

bayne, she had been almost a stranger to his house ; and as he declined in life, and took a less active part in public, he wished for her society : he by no means disapproved her refusal of Lord Allanbank, and assured her he had not the most distant idea of forcing her inclinations with regard to any matrimonial connections.

“ This seemed to be the propitious moment for the discovery of her marriage; and we agreed that Lord Alva should accompany us into the neighbourhood of Huntingdon, from whence, if the Earl received news not unfavourable, we were to send for him to join us; and if otherwise, he might be near to claim his bride, and conduct her to the mansion of his father, who, we were led to believe, knew and approved of the alliance.

“ Constance trembled as we approached near to the conclusion of our journey, and

it required all the address of the Baroness to prevail on her to alight from her horse when we reached the gates of the abbey. The Earl, however, bore the discovery better than could have been expected, and even consented, at the request of the Baroness, to admit Lord Alva to his presence.

“He came, and, except one proposal made by him to Lord Dunbayne, all seemed to go well. This ill-timed proposition was no other than a wish he expressed that the marriage might remain a secret still.

“The pride of Lord Dunbayne was alarmed. “You have done well, Sir,” he cried, with indignation, “you have bestowed your sister upon one who despises her: he fears, from the example she has given him of her prudence, his honour is in unsafe hands; but be assured, Lord Alva, you cannot be more ashamed to own her

her for your wife, than I am that a child of mine should wed an enemy of her country."

"I was myself but little less offended than my father; nor was the cheek of Constance untinged by what she could not help feeling as an affront. Lord Alva perceived he had gone too far; but determined to carry his point, he apologized in the politest terms to the Earl, protesting he could never intend an affront, or wish, on his own account, to conceal his alliance with a family that did him honour: he had been led into the error he had committed by the anxious desire he felt to merit his approbation: he well knew, he said, how much the Earl desired to preserve the friendship of the royal Henry, which he so greatly merited; and as the King would, no doubt, disapprove the marriage, he had merely mentioned his wish to conceal it, till the neutral system that he intended to pursue

should cause more probability to hope he would not extend his displeasure to Lord Dunbayne.

“ Had Lord Alva been in the habit of studying my father’s temper from his earliest infancy, he could not have hit on so certain an expedient to calm the anger he had raised : all offence was immediately forgotten, and gave place to an ardent hope of converting Lord Alva, and consequently all his connections, to a cause in which he could never discover a fault; he agreed to the proposed concealment with avidity, and had in one half hour so completely changed his sentiments, that he absolutely hinted that nothing less than a desire to bring him into disgrace at court could have made me blind to the utility of the measure.

“ I now saw Lord Alva every day growing stronger in my father’s favor, and
hoped

hoped their happiness was fixed for ever. Alas ! I was never more mistaken than in the present instance ; for a discovery was about to take place that for ever excluded peace and felicity from the family of Lord Dunbayne.

C H A P. X.

“SOME affairs in the North had suddenly compelled the Earl of Allankbank to quit England, before he could be made acquainted with the determination of Constance, though it was not by his good pleasure that it was left to her choice; for he had spared no pains to convince Lord Dunbayne, that if he approved his suit that was sufficient.

“On his return he immediately waited on Lord Dunbayne, to know the result of his embassy.

“The

“ The agitation of Lord Alva, on his name being announced, cannot be expressed; nor could I possibly comprehend what he could have to fear who was already secure of her he loved: he implored the Earl in the most earnest manner to be careful of the secret, still alledging the fears he entertained of his incurring the displeasure of his sovereign. My father entertained no suspicion, but left the room to attend Lord Allanbank, with the assurance that he would be mindful of his request. I confess I did not feel so well contented; I could not help thinking there must be some cause that interested his feelings more than it was likely that which he had alledged as his reason could do; for, during the absence of my father, his confusion was so evident, that it became absolutely impossible to pass it over in silence.

“ Constance, with the tenderest anxiety, enquired the cause: he wrung her hand,

and while the tears that trembled in his eyes almost deprived him of the power of utterance, entreated her to leave him. "Your presence, lovely Constance," said he, "wounds me to the very soul; leave me, leave me, if you have any pity for my sufferings." It was the custom of his fair wife never to dispute the will of her Lord; and never till the present moment had she found obedience a painful task: still she held the hand she had taken, and still she lingered as loath to leave him in an hour of sorrow: but on the repetition of the command, in a voice of more authority than I had ever heard him speak with, she acquiesced in silence, though hardly would her sinking spirits suffice to support her trembling frame; and as she left the room, she cast a look so full of mild commiseration on her husband, as recalled him to a sense of his ungentle treatment: he caught her by the hand, "Forgive me, dearest Constance: say but you pardon me, wretch,
that

that I am, to bring affliction to one who has ever yielded even her own wishes to my caprice.”—“Nay, my good Lord, forbear, ’tis I must be the petitioner for pardon; I was to blame, perhaps, to urge you by my enquiries.”—“O God, that I could call such excellence my own,” said Malcolm, as he struck his forehead with an agony of passion to which I believed him to have been a stranger.—“Your own, my Lord,” said Constance: “O Holy Mary, sure his senses fail him.”—“No, Constance, no, they do not; but say that you are mine, and bless me with forgiveness.”—“Need I to say, my Lord, I am your wife; nor heaven nor earth can part us.”

“Then Malcolm may defy misfortune. But, hark!—the voice of Allanbank!—O, Constance, shun his presence; fly and conceal thy fatal beauty from his sight.” The wildness in his looks was sufficient to insure her compliance; and she hastily left the room, terrified at his agitation.

“ It was impossible to be an indifferent spectator of such a scene as this; and I took the earliest opportunity that her absence afforded to beg he would explain the meaning of it.

“ Ask me no questions, Clarendon,” he cried, “ too soon, perhaps, may time discover all.”

“ And why should Lord Alva be so much afraid of discovering his marriage with the daughter of the Earl of Dunbayne ?”

“ Ah ! cease, for heaven’s sake cease : alas ! it is them who will, perhaps, too soon despise the wretched Alva.”

“ In vain did I urge him to be more explicit. He intreated me, in such moving accents, not to wound his heart by the enquiry, that I was obliged to acquiesce, and sat in silence waiting the return of my father ;

ther ; while Malcolm continued to pace the apartment apparently lost to reason, except when now and then he heard the approach of a footstep, when he would start with evident confusion, and as it died away again fall into the same melancholy musing.

“ Suddenly the door was thrown open with violence, and my father entered : rage was depicted on every feature of his face. “ Lord Alva,” said he, “ I have heard that which, if true, I hesitate not to say, stamps villain on your name for ever. I have been told you are married to the sister of the Earl of Allanbank ; yet I have kept my word, I have not divulged the secret, the dishonourable secret I promised to conceal. I could not wound the feelings of the lady. Speak, do I wrong you ?”

“ Lord Alva, with looks of distraction, fell at his feet : “ My Lord, you do not ;

F 6

I confess

I confess it all ; yet hear me : did you but know the arts that have been practised to"—“ Villain, I know too much, rise and defend your life.”—“ No, my Lord,” said I, “ be mine the task of avenging my sister’s injured honour.” Follow me, Lord Alva.

“ Never,” replied he, “ never will I lift my arm against Clarendon.”—“ Then bear the name of coward to thy grave.”—“ From you I can bear even that ; for well you know I deserve it not : in a good cause my arm shrinks not from the combat ; but my cause is bad, and I will never add an injury where I have already heaped too many.”—“ If,” replied I, “ nothing can defend thy branded name, instantly quit the castle. I would not turn assassin ; but, believe me, I cannot answer for myself.”

“ Oh ! let me take one parting look at Constance, and I go for ever.”

“ No,

“No, you behold her no more; you must depart, Lord Alva; already has the dear, unhappy girl more miseries to encounter than her heart will be able to support.” But vain were my arguments, he heeded them not, but rushing past before I was able to prevent him, he entered the chamber of my sister, whom he found to all appearance lifeless in the arms of the Baroness. Lord Dunbayne had, in the first impulse of his passion, too unguardedly informed her of the fatal discovery; and added, if it could be possible to add to afflictions such as hers, by commanding her immediately to prepare to leave his house for ever: he reflected not that she was innocent and deeply injured, but regarding her as one who had brought disgrace upon the family, determined no more to suffer her in his presence.

“The frantic ravings of Malcolm soon recalled her to a temporary sense of her
own

own misery. Severe was the struggle between her resolution and her love; yet to see him, whom she had been accustomed to believe her husband, and not endeavour to mitigate his sufferings, was not in the power of her gentle nature; and, forgetful of her injuries, she did and said every thing in her power to calm the perturbation of his mind.

“She at length arose, and throwing her arms around him, “Dearly beloved Malcolm,” said she, “receive this last embrace, and may heaven forgive this breach of modesty: farewell, my Lord. Ah! still let me call you mine; and if it will afford you any pleasure, be assured you have my pardon, and that the remainder of my life (which may heaven in its mercy shorten) shall be employed in prayers for your happiness:” but in this world we part for—ever, she would have said, but her tongue faltered,

tered, and the sentence died away unfinished.

“ She took the arm of the Baronefs, and attempted to leave the room ; but Malcolm clasped her in his arms, and again detained her. “ Oh ! Constance, say not for ever ; all other miseries than that I could endure with patient resignation but thy loss ; it is not to be thought on, and preserve my senses. Nay, turn not from me, Constance ; I conjure you, hear me : that accursed marriage that tears thee from my arms is neither binding in the eyes of God or man. I could divulge a tale would render me, unhappy as I am in having injured thee, dearer than ever to thy gentle bosom : I was betrayed, compelled, without the liberty of choice, to give the hand, even at the time plighted to thee ; but long I will not be their dupe ; nor shall the arts of the perfidious Allanbank wrest Constance from
me :

me : a dispensation from this unlawful marriage shall make me thine again."

" Alas ! my Lord, no more, it is impossible ; no earthly power can release you from your first marriage ; and I conjure you, if you love my peace, not to attempt, even could the dispensation that you mention be obtained, it were in vain. Could that release you from a sacred promise, or banish from my mind certainty that I usurped another's right ? and should be still unwedded. Think too the public disgrace you bring upon my name, for fame will babble it throughout the world ; and let that one consideration induce you to forego your purpose : for solemnly I vow, much as my soul shrinks at the thoughts of suicide, not to survive the hour that Malcolm publishes the dishonor which my too heedless heart has brought upon the House of Dunbayne."

" The

“ The solemnity of her manner convinced him of her determination being fixed ; nor could I myself, though I admired and approved her conduct, forbear shuddering at the resolution with which she vowed to live an alien to all she loved on earth : yet her ideas were too just to admit of a possibility of disputing them ; for certainly she could not, after such a transaction, have lived his wife with honor. But when we consider the certainty of the dispensation being granted, and the strength of her attachment, we must acknowledge that few at her early years would have had the resolution to make so great a sacrifice at the shrine of honor.

“ The distraction of the luckless Malcolm is undescrivable : he wept, he raved, he imprecated curses on his head, till spent with agitation he sunk into my arms, still clasping the hands of Constance to his aching heart.

“ In

“ In pity to them both, though my heart bled at their sufferings, I tore him from her ; for since ill fortune had decreed their separation to be inevitable, it could not be too soon.

“ The Baronefs, with the tenderest care, led Constance to her chamber, where in a few short hours a delirious fever rendered her removal impossible.

“ The horses of Lord Alva were at the gate, and thither I conducted him. Unfortunately as we passed along he heard the unhappy situation of my sister, and vowed, since we detained him from her sight, to die within the walls that withheld her from his arms.

“ The threats he uttered, and the attempts he made to destroy himself, induced me perhaps to do too much (such at least it was afterwards considered) ; and I accompanied

accompanied him some miles, till I could consign him to the care of a mutual friend, who, I hoped, would be able to reconcile him to life.

“ I might perhaps be wrong, and many I am sensible will blame me for my conduct ; but the life of a fellow-creature appeared in danger ; it was the life too of him who, at the hazard of his own, had preserved mine, and who, till the present fatal instance, had ever acted with a deportment so truly amiable and prepossessing, as had raised him an interest in my heart, which I own with shame, spite of my injured honor, he still retained ; and resentment was more than half absorbed in pity : and let the man who never felt for any thing but honor, and its harsh decrees, question my conduct ; to him I only answer, that his heart has never, perhaps, experienced the delightful sensation of social and universal love for his fellow-creatures—a love that teaches us, while
we

we shun and lament their errors, to share their sorrows as our own, and, spite of personal injury or inconvenience, to use our utmost stretch of abilities to recommend the discontented heart to itself.

“ On my return home I met with what I had no doubt reason to expect, for I had certainly deserved it, the severe displeasure and reproaches of my father ; and I therefore bore it with patience.

“ He still insisted that Constance should depart the castle ; and I immediately sent orders to prepare for our reception at Newcastle, to which place I designed to carry her, till the displeasure of the Earl should be abated, which I did not doubt would be soon, for he had ever been strongly attached to Constance, and would, I was persuaded, when his first agitation was soothed by time, regard her more as an object of his pity than resentment.

“ Things

“ Things were in this train when my elder brother, the Lord Henry, returned from France, whither he had been to assist at the grand tournament given in honor of the young Dauphin's birth.

“ He had heard of the marriage of his sister, and as Lord Alva was of a family equal in rank and honors with our own, he had never made any remarks upon it ; but that indeed was not a cause of wonder, for where his pleasures or his pride was not in danger, Lord Henry was not in the habit of disturbing the serenity of his hours by interfering in family concerns: he did, however, just recollect having heard something of such an event, and before he had been arrived more than eight or nine hours, after the important business of dress was completed, and he had in a whisper, loud enough to be heard, remarked to me that the old gentleman (so he called the Earl) was devilish bad company ; he condescended,

ed, by way of conversation, to enquire the particulars of his sister's settlements, and of Lord Alva's titles, and taste in dress and horse caparisons.

“ He might as well have roused the sleeping lion, as talk on that subject to Lord Dunbayne : he gave him, however, as well as revived passion would allow, an account of the whole transaction, not without many a severe hint as to the part the Baroness and myself had acted in it.

“ As long as he thought proper to confine his reflections to me only I found no fault; but I did not consider Lady Clarendon as subject to his authority, and I hesitated not to avow my opinion.

“ My brother ridiculed, somewhat impertinently, my defence of my wife, and seriously demanded what satisfaction had been taken for the affront given to the family ;

mily ; and on being informed of particulars, he very liberally bestowed on me the epithet of every thing that was disgraceful for not having taken his life any how. "Never," said I, "will I take advantage of the man that is not in a situation to meet me on equal terms. I own too I pity Lord Alva, and could not pierce the heart of one who has been to me as a brother, however justly I might be offended with him. But you, Henry, you have no such ties. Challenge him then openly to the decision of the combat, and the lost fame of Constance shall be revenged.

"To this proposal Lord Henry replied, by saying I was wise to get rid of employment I had not courage enough to undertake ; but, for his part, though the affront merited death, he did not clearly comprehend why he who was not concerned in the affair should hazard his life on the occasion.

"This

“ This answer, from one who had been so wonderfully proud of his honor, did not fail to excite my warmest indignation, and I hesitated not to tell him so; to which he most tauntingly replied, that to convince me of his courage, he would revenge on me the injuries of his sister, to whom indeed they were alone to be imputed; and he did not doubt that if I was suffered to take her back to Newcastle, it would be for no other purpose than to favour a correspondence, or perhaps the continuation of connection between her and Lord Alva.

“ Such an insult acted like electricity upon my temper; all but this I could have borne: but even from my father himself I could not I think have forgiven it, in the heat of passion that his words had occasioned. I blush to say I was provoked to accept his challenge. More than half way had my hand drawn the deadly weapon from the scabbard; and had it not been
for

for the interposing arm of Lord Dunbayne, I might, perhaps, at this moment, have to reproach myself with having lifted mine against the life of an only brother.

“ At his command I sheathed my weapon in silence, and I thank heaven that inspired me to do so. I extended my hand to Henry, but he waved his with scorn, saying, that only at the command of his father he forebore to seek revenge; but friendship from that hour he renounced for ever. Be it, said I, as Lord Henry has determined. The tear started in my father’s eyes, but he was silent: he could not, after what had passed, expect a second advance from me; and from my brother, he knew too well it was fruitless to expect it.

“ To continue under the same roof with him, and not be daily in his company, was impossible, without entirely deranging the customs of my father’s house: this I did

not wish upon any account to do; nor could I for a moment think of living as usual with a man who had behaved in so unwarrantable a manner. I therefore acquainted Lord Dunbayne with my determination to depart; and also, that as the mansion at Newcastle was an undoubted part of Lord Henry's inheritance, I should no longer think of residing there.

“The Earl seemed greatly to approve the latter part of my resolution, and offered to purchase an estate for me in any part of England I would fix on; though it was his wish that the Baroness and myself would reside with him the rest of his days, and make whatever arrangements I thought most conducive to the pleasure of myself and family.

“Happy as I could have been in complying with his request at any other time, I need not say it was impossible to do so now.

now. I thanked him for the kindness of his offers, but declined accepting them, as I had just then in the right of the Barones become possessed of the Castle of Clarendon; and thither, I informed him, it was my intention to retire.

“ I wished to make my sister our companion, for I felt that I had, though innocently, contributed to the arts by which she had suffered in consenting to the private celebration of her marriage; and unwilling to depart without her, I ventured to ask the pleasure of the Earl as to her future disposal.

“ I must acknowledge, my son” said he, “ that the unhappy affair of your sister has almost robbed me of my reason, and had too nearly deprived you of my regard; but your brother’s conduct has had a different effect to that which I suspect it was intended to produce: it has led me to cool
G 2 reflection,

reflection, and reflection tells me you deserve not the treatment you have met with, and which I thank you for enduring as you have done; for I am not so little acquainted with your feelings, Lovel, as to imagine even for a moment that any thing but consideration for me could actuate your conduct: your observation is certainly just that to your brother Lord Henry belongs the task of demanding reparation. You cannot meet Lord Alva. The pusillanimity of Henry's conduct is but too conspicuous, and I much fear he has a greater desire of separating me from my other children, than any real concern about his sister. With regard to his infamous insinuation as to your motive for receiving her into your family, I despise him for the thought; and you will very much oblige me by letting her remain with you as long as it shall please her. In the company of the Baroness she will meet comfort and protection; and though the latter might be in
my

my power to afford her, the former she never could enjoy, where every hour she would be subject to the insults of her brother; and as to any anger I have shewn her, I sincerely lament it, and every thing that I can do to make her happy shall attend her. The story of her unfortunate marriage is yet unknown; and much as I wish for revenge on Lord Alva, my reason tells me our honor is less tainted by the concealment of the whole transaction, than it could be even by his death, as that could not be effected without divulging her disgrace. I shall therefore take no notice of Lord Alva's conduct; and from your brother we have no reason to apprehend resentment, since he seems more inclined to talk of honor than study to preserve it.

CHAP. XI.

“**T**HESE affairs once adjusted, in a few hours I took my leave of Huntingdon : my brother I beheld no more ; and the Baronefs kindly undertook to wait till the health of Constance should be sufficiently recovered to follow me to Clarendon, which I found in no very proper state for their reception : it had been much neglected by its late owner, and was in a very ruinous condition. This was, to be sure, a most uncomfortable change in our household for the Baronefs ; but the goodness of her

her heart made her contented, since it afforded the means of making Constance less unhappy, to whom indeed, when absent from me, her hours were all devoted; nor did she, I flatter myself; bestow her attentions on an ungrateful heart.

“ We frequently heard from Lord Dunbayne, who, notwithstanding the efforts of Lord Henry to the contrary, seemed greatly disposed to pity and pardon Constance; and at the expiration of about three months he sent me word, that if we were sufficiently settled in our new abode to render a visit from him no particular inconvenience, he would be at Clarendon in a very short time.

“ You may be sure that no objection was made on our part to the proposal; but the Earl had waited not the return of his messenger, for in less than ten days he folded to his heart his lovely daughter.

“ He told me on his arrival that it had been his intention to bring me another visitor, for it was his wish to see all his children united; but Lord Henry had not only refused to accompany him, but used every argument in his power to prevent the Earl from visiting me.

“ He continued with us near a month, and before his departure settled on Constance an ample provision : he often paid us an occasional visit; and I believe nothing but the attachment that bound him to the service of King Henry prevented him from residing entirely at the castle.

“ About the time of his first coming to Clarendon, I received a packet from an unknown hand, which on perusing I found, to my infinite surprize, came from Lord Alva, containing an apology, if an apology there could be made for his late conduct, and explaining the measures that had been
made

made use of in order to compel him to marry the sister of his professed enemy, Lord Allanbank.

“ I enquired of the peasant that delivered it from whence it came, and was told that a young rustic, who worked for his father, had entreated him to give it into my hands when he should be gone out to work.

“ Curiosity urged me to see this unknown, and I told the peasant I would be at his father’s cottage about sun-set in the evening.

“ The young man departed, and as soon the ladies were retired to evening vespers in the chapel, I bent my steps to the cottage behind the woods.

C H A P. XII.

“ **T**HE good old peasant delivered me a note which, he said, his young man had left upon the table soon after his son had returned with my message: that he then went out as usual to the fields, as he supposed, to work ; but when evening came on, not seeing him about the cottage, he concluded he must have entered some other way unseen, and going to call him to partake of their little supper, he found the paper and a quantity of pieces of gold coin, both which, he said, must be meant for me ;
for

for as to the paper he could not understand it, and the gold was not for him, as he owed the good lad more than two nobles for working for him, and he would have given ten rather than lose him, for he was the best natured youth in the neighbourhood, and played the prettiest melancholy tunes, as his son said, on the pipe that were ever made, though, for his part, he never heard him, for he only played when he thought nobody observed him ; and he would frequently steal out of the cottage at night, when every body else was at rest, and wander about for hours, but his walks always lay towards the castle, where he would throw himself on the ground under the thickest bushes and softly play upon his pipe till the day-light compelled him to return, which he generally did with tears in his eyes. My dame, continued the old man, would often question him about his sorrows, and tell him she was sure he was in love with some unkind maiden, who

ought to bless the day she saw him first ; but he would never confess, and I saw it troubled him to be questioned, so I left off enquiring, and he did as he pleased ; for he was so mild, it was impossible, an't please you, my Lord, to be angry.

“ I was not a little rejoiced to hear that the paper was not understood at the cottage, for it contained an account that the supposed peasant was no other than Lord Alva, who, wretched when banished from Constance, had assumed that disguise, and applied for employment in the neighbourhood, in hopes that he might one day obtain a glimpse of her.

“ In this, however, he had been disappointed, for a report of her death had been in circulation previous to her leaving Lord Dunbayne's residence ; and as it was her determination never again to appear in public, it had, at her desire, been industriously

triously propagated, and she was so closely secreted in the castle, that even my own domestics knew not that she was there, and no person but one young maid, in whose fidelity she had great confidence, was permitted to see her, except Father Austin, whom I had sent for from Newcastle to be my chaplain at Clarendon.

“ In consequence of this arrangement Lord Alva had never seen her, though of her being in the castle he was certain, as he had followed her and the Baroness from Lord Dunbayne’s in the same disguise, till he beheld them enter. He said, that on hearing I intended coming to the cottage he had left it, as he could not endure the thoughts of seeing one whom he had so deeply injured : he begged I would see that the cottager had the gold ; and that should I ever hear of his wandering about my domains, I would take no measures to prevent him, as he assured me on his honor,
if

if in that I could yet repose any confidence, he had not the slightest intention of distressing Constance by a discovery of who he was ; for to see her, though even at a distance, and to be assured that she was well, was all the happiness his heart was capable of feeling.

“ I with some difficulty prevailed on the cottager to accept his money ; and after leaving a note for him in case he ever called again to inform him how Constance was situated, and the little probability there was of his seeing her, I returned to my chamber to peruse my packet. “ But,” said the Baron, “ it grows late, my friends, let me hope Sir Raimond, and you too Edgar, will be our guests to-night ; we will adjourn to our repast, and to-morrow I will pursue my history.”

The Baroness joined in the request of her Lord, and the youths needed no great
force

force of persuasion to oblige themselves. After supper Editha tuned her harp to the praise of warriors that were now no more : Maude joined in the song : the young men glowed with the hope that they might one day thus be praised as monuments of worth and valour ; and the Baron, while he listened with delight to the noble deeds of his ancestors, forgot the sorrows which the recollection of the past revived in his bosom : the amiable Baronefs beheld the change with gratitude to heaven, and pleasure beamed from every eye of this little family party.

It was late ere they retired to rest ; and as they parted for the night at the head of the great stairs, they whispered to each other, as they cast many an anxious look along the passage of the North Gallery, that tomorrow they should know all ; but little did they suspect the nature of the secret to which that morrow was destined to give birth.

The

The youths rose early on the ensuing morning to partake in the pleasures of the chase; but the spirits of the Baron beat not in unison to amusement: his thoughts were seriously employed on the changes and alterations in his family to which a few hours might probably be witness, and he passed the day in the castle.

'Twas late in the noon ere they returned, and it was not till the evening that the Baron pursued his narrative. "I promised you," said he, "last night that I would this day satisfy your curiosity respecting the fate of my sister Constance; and though it pains my heart to recollect her sufferings, you shall be indulged: but to do that in a manner to be clearly understood, it is proper that you should be previously acquainted with the contents of Lord Alva's packet, and that I may not fall into errors I will read the original." So saying, he took from
his

his cabinet a bundle of papers, and read as follows :

*From MALCOLM, of ALVA, to the LORD
CLARENDON.*

“ Not daring any longer to address you as my friend, yet anxious, if possible, once more to make you so, I have intruded, Lord Clarendon, on your leisure some accounts that may at least prove, I hope, some extenuation of the wrongs I have done you. Long, Lovel, very long have I been a wanderer near your dwelling, and seen from a distance the man I had not resolution to address ; but worse than that has been my torments, I know that the castle contains my Constance, yet heaven, as if to add to my misery, keeps her an alien from my eyes.

“ Oft when the weight of my misfortunes have at times too heavily oppressed
my

my almost distracted reason, I have endeavoured to obtain relief from present afflictions, by retracing the days which are past, alas ! for ever : yet why should I regret them ? are they not charged with guilt, that by far overbalances their pleasure ? and have they not involved in misery one whose happiness is infinitely more dear to me than was in the happy days the life of the too wretched Malcon.

“ You are also, my Lord, but too well acquainted with the consequence of my actions to need a repetition of them ; but you are still ignorant of the principal occurrences that led to them ; and it is to give you that information I have ventured to disturb your repose, by the recollection of one so justly hateful to you.

“ Yet, I confess, I have entered on this task more from the hopes of exciting your pity than to escape your resentment.

“ You

“ You are no stranger, my Lord, to the repeated messages that I received during your Lordship’s absence at Newcastle from Scotland, and the reluctant leave I took at your return. Those messages were from Lord Balmano, my father, to acquaint me that he was assembling his clans in consequence of some hostile preparations making by Lord Allanbank, whose castle was at a very small distance from our domains, and which bore a strong appearance of being directed against his possessions : of these appearances he spoke, however, of things that were in no great state of forwardness ; nor did he by any means require my immediate return, for he well knew the charge you had intrusted me with, and his honor revolted from the idea of soliciting me to quit so honorable an appointment, till your return enabled me to surrender it into your hands : he knew also, Clarendon, of the love I bore your charming sister ; and, ever indulgent to my wishes, he determined
not

not to tear me from her beloved society till necessity required the sacrifice.

“ About three days previous to your arriving at the castle, with the most unwelcome tidings that ever reached my ear, again I heard from him; but his intelligence was not like the former: he informed me that the castle of Balmano had been attempted in the night by his unmanly neighbour, who gave no other reason for his hostilities than revenge to me.

“ He had, however, been defeated with much loss; but Lord Balmano had in the action received a wound in his side, which rendered him totally unable to take any active part in a second attack, an event of which no one entertained the least doubt but it would soon take place, and for which reason he was under the necessity of requesting my return to head his forces: he added, that report had for some days said Lord
Allanbank.

Allanbank was absent on some secret expedition, but it was regarded as a story circulated by himself, in order to lull him and his followers in security, and render the castle a more easy conquest.

“ I at first thought of joining my father immediately ; for as you had no attack to apprehend from any but Lord Allanbank, who appeared to be too busily employed in Scotland to make his appearance before Clarendon, I imagined the castle cou'd not be in much danger, particularly as you was expected to return in a day or two ; but when I read the conjecture of Lord Balmano, as to his supposed absence from Scotland being a deception, my sentiments were changed, I believed him to be at that hour not only from his castle, but meditating an attempt on Clarendon, and that his hostilities towards my father was merely a feint to draw me from the honor of protecting its lovely inhabitants. The more I considered
the

the circumstances, the more was I confirmed in my opinion, and I dispatched the messenger to say that I would certainly set forward for my father's residence on the third day :—fatal determination, ah ! why did I suffer delay to involve me in years of never-ending misery.

“ On your arrival you may remember I acquainted you with the necessity of my departure, and entreated you to let me make the amiable Constance my future companion. Ever indulgent to the man you honoured with your friendship, you consented; but actuated by motives of (suffer me to say) mistaken prudence, you gave it on the hard condition that it must be delayed till my return.”

“ Mistaken indeed,” said the Baron, while he sighed, and passed his hand across his eyes to conceal the starting tear. As soon

soon as he had recovered his voice he re-seated himself, and continued as follows:

“ Hard was the task of leaving her behind, but duty prevailed; and blessed with what I regarded as a certainty of soon calling Constance mine, I yielded, though reluctantly, the long-cherished hope of present felicity.

“ With sweet deluding hopes of future happiness, I set forwards for my native land, conscious of nothing under heaven that could disturb my schemes of happiness. If I had concealed from you my true opinion of Lord Balmano’s danger, believe me had no other reason than a fear of appearing to make a merit of having waited your return, with the intent of encreasing the partiality already too liberally bestowed on me.

Crushed

“ Crushed were the fond aspiring hopes of my youth on entering the Castle of Balmano : no longer did the high hung banners of my ancestors wave on the lofty battlements ; the gates were unclosed, the porte-cullis demolished : no longer did the wary centinel watch the approach of the enemy, or the soft notes of minstrels harp salute the arrival of the welcome visitor.

“ Within the castle all was correspondent to the desolation that was visible without : in vain I walked from room to room, in expectation of meeting some one who might be able to explain the dreadful mystery that on every side surrounded me.

“ No sound was returned to my repeated call, but the melancholy echo of my own voice, and now and then the sound of distant footsteps that appeared to fly from my approach.

“ After

“ After having wandered, without meeting a human being, through every well-known apartment, once appropriated to the use of my family, I entered the wing of the castle inhabited by the superior domestics ; and after a tedious and fruitless search, I at last arrived at the door of an apartment which I recollected to be that of the chaplain, and from whence it was easy to perceive I should have been excluded, had it not been for the inability of its possessor to make it secure.

“ At a distance I perceived the venerable man, sitting apparently in no small apprehension as to who it might be that was approaching ; but his alarm soon gave place to pleasure on perceiving it was me.

“ At my request he informed me of the misfortunes that had involved our house in desolation.

“ On the day after the Earl’s last message had been dispatched to me at Clarendon, a large party of Lord Allanbank’s vassals, led by himself, surrounded the castle. My father, though confined to his bed, prepared to meet him on the first alarm, and insisted, contrary to the first entreaties of his faithful domestics, on leading the engagement in person.

“ The arrival of the enemy had been too secret to admit assembling more than half the vassals, and the numbers were consequently very unequal. The contest had not lasted long before Lord Allanbank presented himself to my enraged father : with most unmanly tauntings he told him his son did well to avoid an enemy he dared not meet ; and much did he commend the prudence of my caution. Roused by the unmerited insult, Lord Balmano told him that he believed nothing but the certainty of his son’s absence, and his own ill health, had made

made him venture to appear at the castle. Many words passed not on either side : the sword was indeed the readiest mode of deciding the dispute.

“ This was the termination that the proud Peer wished for : he knew the Lord Balmano was not recovered from his wound ; and, exclusive of that circumstance, his age rendered him no equal assailant. They fought—need I say my father was not destined to be the victor ; no, he was vanquished, he, Clarendon, who never yielded to an enemy, was vanquished in defending the honor of an unworthy son ; yet let me recal the word, I was not then undeserving his good opinion : I had not then wronged you, and my lovely Constance. He fought till rendered insensible from loss of blood, he fell, and, I thank heaven, that even by that means, he was spared the pain of yielding.

“ After that unfortunate event, continued the good Priest, never more did my revered Lord enter this castle, for Lord Allanbank commanded that he should be carried to his mansion of Melville Abbey ; but not without opposition was this unwarrantable order carried into effect.

“ Such of his followers as had survived the fight swore never to abandon him alive or dead, but to detain him at the castle, or lose their lives. Even I, my Lord, whose calling forbade to wield the weapon of destruction, forgot my holy profession, and lent the little aid I could afford. Alas ! our efforts were in vain, our numbers never equal (for we had no other guards at the castle than such as were always on duty, and those now greatly reduced were compelled with grief to behold him borne away, still insensible of his situation, and surrounded by a numerous train of his enemy’s followers).

“ Lord

“ Lord Allanbank staid only to dis-
mantle the battlements, and the banners
were carried before him to Melville Abbey.
Such of the martial vassals of my Lord as
were still capable of making any resistance
to his will, he commanded to be conducted
prisoners to his residence; but the servants
of the household, whom he considered as an
incumbrance, were to continue here; and
as he was pleased to express much contempt
for myself, I was to do the same.

“ I pleaded, my Lord, pleaded even to
the foe of the House of Balmano, to share
the fortunes of my Lord; I need not say in
vain, for it was to the unfeeling heart of
the Lord of Allanbank. As to the domes-
tics, when once he was gone, they little
heeded his orders; and I believe there are
not more than twenty left who have not
fled the castle, fearful of his return; but
never since that ill-fated day have I heard
any tidings from Melville Abbey.

H 3

“ And

“ And one thing that has not a little amazed me is, that no attempt was made to plunder the castle of any thing of value ; nor did he once even appear to think of gaining the treasures.

“ Imagine, if possible, Clarendon, the situation of my mind, to behold the well-earned banners of a long line of noble ancestors torn from our possession, and the hitherto untarnished honors of our house laid in the dust by an insulting and an inglorious enemy. No clan in readiness to assist me in avenging the insults offered to my father, and worse than all, no possibility of obtaining any certain account whether he yet survived, of which, from his health and situation, there was but too much cause to doubt.

“ It was, however, necessary that some method should be adopted to attempt his release without delay ; and the few domestics
who

who yet inhabited the castle were soon, by Father Anthony, informed of my return, by whom I was instantly furrounded, all eager to testify by their attention to me the love they bore to their absent Lord.

“ I immediately gave orders for the accommodation of the little train of followers that had been my escort ; and as they were too much fatigued to undertake any enterprize till they were rested and refreshed, I employed the remainder of the day in sending to require the immediate presence of such of our clans as resided on the more distant parts of the domains of Lord Balmano ; and by the morning’s dawn I found assembled in the castle court a party nearly to the amount of three hundred, all eager to contend who should be foremost in rescuing their beloved master from captivity, and congratulating each other in having once more a commander to lead them to revenge.

H 4

“ But

“ But the battle so earnestly desired was destined never to come to a decision, and I who believed myself to be at the summit of all human misery, was soon destined to experience far more distressing trials.

CHAP.

C H A P. XII.

“ **O**N the day fixed for our attack on Melville Abbey, about two hours previous to the commencement of our march, I received from Lord Allanbank a message to say that if I wished or intended the liberation of Lord Balmano, it could be effected by no other means than private conference ; for should the fortunes of the fight be mine, the hour that rendered him incapable of detaining his captive should end that captive’s life, and that he was ready to grant an interview whenever I thought proper to request it.

H 5

“ Insolent

“ Insolent and unfeeling as this message was, there remained not any alternative, and I sent him word that on his granting hostages for my return, I would be at the Abbey the same day ; he complied, and I set forward for Melville Abbey, attended only by the accustomed number of domestics.

“ Ill did my spirit brook submitting even for a moment to the proud insolence of such a man ; but the safety of my father was in his power, and who could tell of what iniquity he might not be guilty : I therefore determined to bury in my own bosom my resentment, till the liberty of Lord Balmano should enable me, without endangering him, to take that revenge on Lord Allanbank his conduct merited.

“ On my arrival, I found him as I expected, haughty and reserved ; and as I wished not to be longer than I could help with
with

with a man I despised, I demanded to be informed for what purpose he had wished a conference, and by what means I was to obtain the liberation of the Earl my father; if it was a ransom he required, though his victory, which had been obtained by treachery, entitled him to none, it was ready.

“ Without noticing the remark, he said that the prospect of gain was not the object of his consideration; but that as he doubted not an interview with my father would be agreeable, he would, before we proceeded to business, direct an attendant to conduct me to him.

“ I bowed my assent in silence, and followed the domestic with an agitation greater than I had ever before experienced; yet would my thoughts sometimes wander to the conduct of Lord Allanbank, from whom I had but little reason to expect such an offer of consideration and civility. But

my reverie was but of short continuance; for the servant, after securing every apartment through which he conducted me, arrived at last at a small door, which he opened, and respectfully bowing, told me I was now in the chamber of the Earl, and withdrew.

“ I looked anxiously round for my father, and beheld him lying extended on a couch at the further end, with no better accommodation than a hard matrafs, and his person exhausted by illness, in consequence of wounds which had never been properly attended to, for fear of discovering in what part of the castle he was confined.

“ I need not say he was rejoiced at my unexpected appearance; but it was the fleeting joy of the moment, and instantly vanished, on a supposition that I was too probably his fellow-prisoner.

“ Long

“ Long had he flattered himself with the hopes of my avenging the insults he had received, and it was more than he could support to behold me in the power of his enemy ; the thought became too powerful for his weakened frame, and he fainted in my arms. The horrors of distraction crowded round me ; in vain did I attempt his recovery ; every effort was unattended with success. Unable to quit him to seek assistance, I knew not what to do ; and I called loudly for help, without entertaining the slightest hopes of obtaining it : yet in that I had dared to think heaven had forsaken me : assistance came—it came, Clarendon, in the form of one who, if it had not been for the idea of Constance, which never even for a moment left my mind, I should have thought an angel.

“ A lady entered at the sound of my voice : the reason of my alarm needed not an explanation : she left the apartment in haste,

haste, but soon returned attended by a young maid, who brought some restoratives which, with the most anxious solicitude, they gave the Earl, and to my inexpressible delight, I beheld they were not administered in vain.

“As soon as tranquillity was in some measure restored, I observed that Lord Balmano and his fair physician were no strangers to each other, and that she attended him with the tender assiduity of a daughter.

“When he was tolerably restored, she was about to retire from the apartment; but at the earnest entreaties of my father she with reluctance turned to receive the thanks of his son; and to the Lady Anne of Allanbank I found he was indebted for every comfort, few as they were, that he enjoyed in his confinement.

“Yet

“ Yet, let not my expressions under-rate the merit of her services; though they were trifling, they were all her circumscribed power would allow her to bestow; and had they been treble, sincerely do I believe, her benevolent heart would have rejoiced in affording them; ever since she had been acquainted with his place of confinement, which was near her chamber, she had, by means of a secret entrance, to which her brother was a stranger, been his almost daily visitor, in order to bring him such nourishment, suitable to his condition, as she could procure, without incurring the suspicions of Lord Allanbank, whose displeasure she ran the greatest risk of drawing on herself, if discovered, and on whose caprice she had the unspeakable misfortune to be wholly dependant.

“ Our conversation was destined to experience a most unwelcome, as well as unexpected interruption, by the sudden entrance
of

of the Lord Allanbank ; rage was depicted on his countenance, when he turned his revengeful eyes on the trembling and affrighted Lady Ann, whose absence he commanded in the most ungentle accents, adding, that till now he did not believe her capable of leaguings with his professed and hated enemies.

“ No sooner had she quitted the apartment, than he gave me to understand I was his prisoner ; it was true, he observed, I had entered his gates, on the assurance of his word of honour for my safe return, but that the baseness of my conduct, in attempting to seduce his sister from her duty, to become the abettor of Lord Balmano’s flight to save his ransom, rendered it an indispensable measure that I should either consent to an immediate marriage with her, or continue his captive till I could, (as he added with an insulting smile) find some more eligible plan for my release.

At

At the conclusion of his speech, to which my indignation left me without the power of replying, he quitted us, giving strict orders to some of his vassals, who were stationed at the door to guard us at the peril of their lives, and also on their duty, to take care we held no conference with any one whatever.

To describe the anguish I felt at the idea of my situation is impossible; to know myself in the power of an insulting enemy, nor dare to treat him as he merited, lest it should produce severer suffering, if that was possible, to my almost expiring father; and, more severe than all the rest, to behold him daily sinking to the grave, without being able to procure him the assistance he so much wanted.

“ A thousand times did I regret that a false notion of honor had prevented my application to my Sovereign to demand his release;

release; then might he at this moment have been blest with health, and I at liberty to seek revenge; but pride had whispered me, that to take any other means than those of arms, would be an everlasting stain upon the honor of a foldier's name, and the thought had been rejected as soon as formed; long too did I entertain the hopes that my faithful domestics would, on their return, arouse my followers to attempt my deliverance, and well I knew they wanted neither courage nor capacity to undertake it.

“ Yet the revolving Sun, day after day, sunk on my disappointed hopes, yet still the dawn renewed them, till, wearied out, I at last ventured to enquire of my guards, who had hitherto preserved uninterrupted silence, the fate of my faithful domestics, and was told, with the most malicious satisfaction, they shared my luckless fortune,
and

and were all closely confined in a distant part of the building.

“ The last hope had now forsaken me ; and unable longer to support the contemplation of my father’s sufferings, I at last determined to conquer, if possible, my indignation, and restore him to liberty by any means ; for this purpose I demanded an audience of the Earl, that I might be informed by what means it was to be obtained.

“ His answer was, that the means were doubtless in my power, but that he should in a few moments be with me, for so great was his caution, lest we should discover in what part of the Castle we were confined, and attempt an escape, that it was his fixed determination never, on any occasion whatever, to suffer us, even for a moment, to quit the small boundary of our prison.

“ He

“ He was for once true to his promise, and added to my torments by appearing in my presence.

“ He briefly informed me, that an alliance with the Lady Ann, was the only terms on which he would listen to an accommodation, and that on my consent to that, I should directly be at liberty to depart the Castle with the Earl, my father; but without it, never, he said, by every thing sacred, should either of us again breathe the air of freedom, should you, he continued, effect an escape, which is, I believe, an absolute impossibility; that moment shall terminate the existence of your father. Think on my words, Lord Alva, and think also, that they will never be retracted but by your marriage with my sister: the House of Allanbank is not tainted with dishonor, and she has long regarded you with a degree of partiality too great for her, unsolicited, to bestow—Speak, my
Lord

Lord Alva, shall we be friends or enemies?—"Enemies till death," said I.—"That may not then, perhaps, be long," replied Lord Allanbank, and he glanced a look of dreadful import at Lord Balmano as he left the room.

"Too well did I understand the menace, but entertained not an idea of his daring to put it in practice, till early on the following morning we were informed, by his order, that the Earl must prepare to die that evening, unless I chose to accept the terms already proposed, which it was now in my power to do, for the last time. Not daring to reflect on what I did, I gave my reluctant promise to wed the Lady Ann; but scarcely had the fatal words escaped my lips, before the image of my lovely Constance presented itself to my tortured remembrance, and often was I on the point of retracting, but the idea of my father dying, and dying too
while

while it was in my power to save him, as often drove the resolution from my tongue.

“ In less than an hour, during which time I paced the apartment in all the agonies of despair, I received a message from the Earl to join him in the next chamber, where he was waiting my approach, attended only by the Chaplain and the unfortunate Lady Ann.

“ An universal tremor shook my frame, when I reflected, that a few moments only would intervene, ere I must resign the hope of calling Constance mine for ever ; and at the moment that the Priest joined our hands, I involuntarily withdrew mine.

“ The Earl observed, and could ill brook the affront : “ Lord Alva,” said he, “ if you repent your promise, you are for me at liberty to break it ; but, depend on it, I shall keep mine ; the sun that sets this evening

evening is the last that sets on Lord Balamano's existence."

"At that cruel moment, Clarendon, I heard my father, in the height of delirium, calling on me for liberty and revenge; I know not what I did; again I offered my hand; the terrified Ann endeavoured to conceal the tear that glittered in her eyes, fearful alike of offending him who was now, and him who would be shortly the controulers of her destiny; the fatal ceremony again went on, and sealed my doom for ever. Could I do less in such a situation? Ask your own heart, Clarendon, could you have acted otherwise?"

"No sooner was the ceremony past, than I demanded the restoration of my father, and was informed that we were now at liberty to depart, and the sooner the more agreeable; to this, you may be certain, I objected not; and in less than three hours

I was

I was on my journey to the Castle of Balmano. Lady Ann too, I was told, was now to depart with us; and on a subject so indifferent to me, I acquiesced in silence; her situation was, I must confess, truly pitiable; she had been compelled, by a cruel brother, to marry a man whom she had never beheld but once, and to whom, she behaved with the most indisputable propriety, though she was but too well assured his heart was for ever devoted to another, yet was she ever gentle, kind, and attentive, even to a degree, which I thought would endanger her health; for though my heart refused her all affection, the gentleness of her manners were such, and the compassion she had shewn for the sufferings of my father, so truly amiable, that not to esteem her as a friend was impossible; and more than esteem she wished not, nay, she feared to obtain; her heart had very early been warmly attached to a deserving youth, who, for disparity of fortune, had been rejected

jeſted by her haughty brother, and not long ſince ſlain treacherouſly by his hand. To the contemplation of his numerous virtues ſhe had vowed to conſecrate her future life; but the pious wiſh had been denied by the Lord Allanbank, in order to compel me into a marriage, and he little heeded either the wiſhes or entreaties of his unhappy ſiſter.

“ This intereſting tale ſhe took the earlieſt opportunity of telling me. “ From you, Lord Alva,” ſaid ſhe, “ I hope for compaſſion; the unfortunate ſimilarity of our ſituations will, I flatter myſelf, produce a ſimilarity of ſentiment; reſuſe not then my firſt, my laſt requeſt; let me become the daughter of Lord Balmano, and Lord Alva’s ſiſter.”

“ Amiable Lady Ann,” I replied, “ doubt not my compliance; I thank you for this

mark of your confidence—no, rest assured your wishes shall never receive interruption from me; still let your pensive mind dwell, without fear of my reproaches, on the amiable qualities of the departed Lennox; but let my father's house be your's, you will otherwise draw on yourself the resentment of Lord Allanbank; my father too will but too much stand in need of your attentions, for I, alas! am already incapable of being his companion."

"To my father's recovery her hours were all devoted: and I had soon the inexpressible pleasure to behold they were not devoted in vain.

"We had been now above a fortnight returned to the Castle, and I began to find myself in a situation to encounter the destroyer of my repose. My father's clans evinced the greatest readiness to hazard every

every thing in his cause, and I once more publicly defied Allan of Allanbank to the decision of the combat.

“ This was a measure which he had supposed I should not adopt, in consideration of our alliance; but though perfectly willing to allow Lady Ann every merit she deserves, I could never feel any degree of concern for her sufficient to induce me to forget the injustice of her brother.

“ Finding it was not to be avoided without public loss of honor, Lord Allanbank accepted the challenge; we met, and fortune was propitious to my cause, and Lord Allanbank lay prostrate at my feet; revenge for a moment tempted me to extirpate a life of villainy, but humanity recalled me to reason, and forbade me to wound a fallen enemy; I gave him his forfeited life, if that deserved the name of a gift, hat seemed hovering on the point of leaving
I 2 him

him for ever ; some of his attendants bore him to his home, and I once more fought mine ; but to what irremediable misery was my life subjected.

“ I was deeply involved in my own melancholy reflections, when I was interrupted by the entrance of one of my domestics, who brought me a note that he had picked up during the time we were engaged, supposing it to be mine. I immediately opened it to examine the contents ; but, alas ! no consolation did they afford me ; they rather tended to plunge me into a mode of conduct, which, till that hour, I had never entertained a thought of.

“ The letter was from the Earl of Allanbank to a confidential friend, telling him by what means he had betrayed me into his power, and that when he permitted me to visit Lord Balmano in confinement, it was with the expectation that the
misery

misery with which he was surrounded would induce me to sign an instrument, resigning in his favor all my pretensions to the Lady Constance; but curiosity tempting him to observe what emotion this interview produced, he discovered his sister to be of the party, and the idea instantly struck him, of compelling me to unite myself to her, by that means putting it for ever out of my power to be his rival.

“ As soon as this well-concerted project was settled to his mind, he proposed again to demand the hand of Constance, who, he observed, though he had once loved better than any thing on earth except revenge, he had now no other reason for wishing to marry, but to become a lasting torment to her, myself, and, lastly, to the haughty Clarendon, who had doubly provoked his anger, first by conquering him, and then by refusing his alliance.

“I staid to read no more; he was, I well knew, disabled from putting his plan into execution immediately, but I knew not how long he might continue so, and I determined instantly to take the road to Clarendon Castle, but I solemnly declare my intentions went no further than to warn you of your danger, to own my unhappy marriage, and take a last farewell of Constance.

“My horses were soon ready, and taking a hasty leave of the Earl, who was, with tears of joy, replacing his recovered banners. I recommended Lady Ann to his protection, and once more set forward for your abode.

“Lord Balmano was unacquainted with my true destination, for I was fearful, if Lord Allanbank should by any means hear I was gone to Clarendon, it would induce him to make an application to Lord Dunbayne,

bayne, before he could be put upon his guard.

“ You may remember, Clarendon, the first news you gave me was, that Lord Dunbayne had commanded her return; my imagination immediately suggested to me that it was to wed Lord Allanbrank.—The thought was madness—Often had I attempted to disclose the dreadful secret of my marriage, and was now on the point of making you acquainted with the whole transaction, when the Baroness unexpectedly entered, followed by the fair object of my heart, rendered, if possible, more lovely than ever, by the enchanting blush spread over her interesting countenance.

“ Trust me, my friend, till this unlucky moment, no thought injurious to the honor of your House had ever found a place within this heart. The irresistible attractions of Constance, the fears of Lord

Allanbank's success, and the violence of my own passion, conspired at once to undermine my resolution, and I conceived the idea of entirely suppressing the discovery I had come to make, I entreated you to fulfil the promise you had given me to consign the lovely Constance to my arms, and you consented.—Exalted instance of unmerited friendship, the amiable Baroness too seconded my claim, nor did my Constance wear the semblance of reluctance.

“Too well are you acquainted with the discovery that followed: the Earl of Allanbank, on reaching England, received from Lord Dunbayne the refusal of his daughter's hand. Mortified at the rejection of his suit, Lord Allanbank replied, he had long been no stranger to her attachment to Lord Alva, but he thought too highly of her virtue to suppose it could possibly continue after his marriage.

“ Lord

“ Lord Dunbayne at first regarded this information to have arisen from some mistake ; but he was soon informed of my union with the Lady Ann, and every doubt was cleared. Never, from that hour, have I known happiness or peace ; for never, till by my means, did dishonor appertain to the House of Balmano.

“ I need not ask your protection for the ill-starred infant, that will soon become the object of your care ; I know too well the affection, which both you and the Baroness feel for its unhappy mother, to doubt your goodness to them both. Oh, that it may one day be permitted me to claim them as my own, and publish to the world the enviable honor Constance has conferred on me, by condescending to become my wife. Adieu, Clarendon, I will trouble you no more.—If possible, think of me with compassion ; trust me, I stand in need of it ; and if the request will not too deeply

I 5 wound

wound the feelings of the injured Constance, intreat her to preserve in her remembrance the wretched Alva.

“ In a few weeks I again heard of Lord Alva. His wife, the Lady Ann, had caught a fever, the effects of which had proved fatal, and deprived her of a life she had long been weary of ; though in justice to Malcolm I must acknowledge, he suffered no attention to be omitted that could possibly preserve either her health or comfort. But the death of the lamented Lenox was a blow too severe to be forgotten, and the first hour her heart had felt happy since that event was that when she resigned her breath for ever.

“ He warmly entreated me to use my influence with my sister to prevail on her to be again united to him directly : he owned that he was but too well convinced she could no longer esteem him ; but for
the

the sake of the infant whose birth was every hour to be expected, he begged her not to refuse him.

“ I own, though I had every reason to detest him, there was something in his story and his conduct that never failed to interest me in his favour. I gave his letter to Constance, and left her to comment on it at leisure, while I went to dispatch a messenger to hasten him to Clarendon ; for waving every other consideration, it was certainly much to be wished the marriage should take place before the birth of the child ; and I doubted not but Constance would see the affair in the same light that I did.

“ In this conjecture I was, however, mistaken ; for on asking her determination, I found her resolutely fixed on refusing him. The Baroness and myself tried every method to reason her out of her opinion, but in vain. “ Attempt not,

Lady Clarendon," said she, "to move me in favor of Lord Alva, he has too deeply injured me to merit my forgiveness; yet I will own to you he is still dear to my heart: that had it been my lot to be his wife, there is no dignity this world can give for which I would have changed my title; but he has deceived me basely, and wantonly subjected me to scorn. Who but yourself would condescend to be the associate of the degraded Constance of Dunbayne! yet even though I should pardon him, what happiness could be expected to result from such a marriage? I should despise myself, and he too probably would do the same. I am at present dead to the world, nor can any change of circumstances ever make me desire to enter it. In the society of yourself and Lovel I have all the pleasure this world can afford me; permit me then, Lady Clarendon, to be still your guest, nor seek to change the sentiments that reason, though not love, tells me to pursue."

“ Finding

“ Finding her so averse to the proposal, we forbore to urge it further, hoping that the presence of Lord Alva might be more likely to succeed.

“ He did not long delay to follow the invitation, slight as it was, that I had sent him : indeed it might, more properly speaking, be called a permission ; for I had given him to understand that, to prevent the unpleasant consequences that would infallibly result from our meeting, it was not my intention ever to see him again.

“ To every entreaty of Lord Alva’s to be permitted to behold her, Constance was resolute in her refusals, and severely did he suffer by the decree ; but the repeated expostulation of the Baroness at length prevailed on her in part to abandon the resolution :—she consented to marry Lord Alva, but it must be on her own terms.

“ He

“He waited not to enquire what they were : she had consented, and he was too happy to dispute her will ; but soon was he awakened from this flattering dream of pleasure, for on no other conditions would she become his wife than on his giving his solemn promise never again to come within her sight. “I will marry him,” said she, “for the sake of saving my infant from bearing a dishonorable name : but let Lord Alva not deceive himself, him I will never live with ; here for the remainder of my life will I remain, nor shall he ever force me from the boundaries of these walls.”

“Cruel as these conditions were, Lord Alva gave the promise, and trusted to time to work an alteration in his favour ; and so desirous was he of atoning as far as possible for his conduct, that had they been severer still he would not have murmured at her commands.

“In

“ In about three days they were united in the same chapel where she had once before too incautiously given her hand : it was the first time of their meeting, and in truth it was on both sides a painful one. The tears rolled down the cheeks of Alva as she entered the chapel, attended by the Baroness and Lady Elinor Grey : he flew to meet her, and folded her to his heart in rapture. Constance withdrew herself from his arms, and endeavouring to appear composed, suffered him to lead her to the altar. Her emotions were not inferior to Malcolm’s ; but fearful of betraying them, she had envelopped herself in a thick veil that flowed to the ground on every side, and saved her from encountering the distressing glances of either pity or admiration.

“ With slow and trembling step she gained that part of the chapel where I was waiting with the reverend Austin for her approach, and gave her hand to me.
The

The Baronefs and Lady Elinor placed themselves behind her, and Sir Hildebrand Fitzalwin took the other fide of Lord Alva.

“Austin declared himself ready to begin the ceremony. The courage of Constance appeared to forsake her; and fearful that her compliance had been actuated by our advice, I determined if so to proceed no further. “May I hope, Constance,” said I, “that I bestow your hand with your own approbation?”

“If I did not, my Lord,” she replied, “be assured I would even now withdraw it.”

“She paused, and the animated eyes of Malcolm spoke his gratitude. Constance perceived it, and even unwilling to encourage hopes that she did not mean to gratify: she added, that the firm reliance she had on Lord Alva’s faithful performance of his promises

promises induced her to resign her hand to him without reluctance.

“ This was too much for Malcolm; he had never supposed it possible that she would so steadily preserve her sentiments. He entreated her even on his knees to pardon him, and remit the severe sentence her displeasure had inflicted. But Austin reminded them of the sanctity of the place, and in some measure recalled Malcolm to reason, who, unable to obtain any other, submitted in silent anguish to the terms she had imposed.

“ No sooner was the ceremony concluded than she retired from the chapel with Lady Elinor, leaving her afflicted husband in a state of misery from which no time promised to relieve him; and never but once after did they meet again.

“ In

“ In about a fortnight after this event she was brought to bed of a daughter ; and we received the dreadful tidings that she could not possibly survive longer than a few short hours.

“ On this occasion she requested the Baronefs to bring Lord Alva to her apartment. “ I have,” said she, “ long ſince bound myſelf by the moſt ſolemn vow never again to behold him till I was paſt the weakneſs of relenting ; for I was too well convinced that the affection I have ever felt for him would vanquiſh every ſuggeſtion of injured honor. I now feel that hour faſt approaching, and I may ſurely now behold him without impropriety, and intreat his care of our unfortunate offspring.

“ The Baronefs waited not for her to repeat the request, but haſtened immediately to ſend the welcome ſummons to Malcolm, who had ever ſince his marriage reſided in
the

the neighbourhood of Clarendon, as loath to quit the spot that contained all he held dear ; and with transport did he fly to visit the idol of his affections. The Baroness met him in the hall, in order to prepare his mind for the scene he had to go through ; for he knew not her danger, or the birth of his daughter.

“ The scene that followed was too interesting to admit description, and in less than two hours she resigned her breath, as she reclined in the arms of her beloved Alva.

“ The Baron wept at the recollection of his fair sister’s sufferings ; nor did the amiable Baroness appear less afflicted.

“ Their silence was at last broken by Maude, who, for the sake of interrupting it, enquired what had become of their child ? “ I educated her, Maude,” replied the

the Baron, endeavouring to recover his tranquillity," with all the tenderness I could have bestowed on yourself; nor did she prove unworthy of my care: perhaps the time may not be long e'er you may judge of her merits and attractions. After the death of his wife, Lord Alva, who had made his peace with me, found himself unhappy at Clarendon, where every object served but to call her to his memory, and embitter his moments by reminding him of the treasure he could never more possess.

"He left us, and from that time I never more beheld him, till I followed him with sincere regret to the cold tomb.

"Before he departed, he made the most affluent provision for his infant daughter, who he consented should remain under the care of Lady Clarendon; and though it was always my intention to provide for her

as my own, I did not think myself entitled to dispute his pleasure.

“He had scarcely had time to settle his affairs to his satisfaction before he followed his beloved wife to the grave; for it was his request to his father to intreat my consent to his occupying a part of her tomb, and you may easily believe I had no inclination to refuse it.

“Thus,” said the Baron, “you are in possession of my motives for retiring from the world, and they have been so long in force, that I think I may venture to say they will not change in haste.”

“I fear you will think we are never content, my Lord,” said Sir Raimond; “but we are still unacquainted with the fortunes that attended your young charge, and I can answer for all there is not one of us that is not greatly interested in her history: will

will you pardon me if I intreat you to indulge us with it ?”

“ Willingly, Sir Raimond, you are indeed all greatly concerned in it, and her being at present one of my auditors, is the reason why I have so long delayed to make you acquainted with her; but you shall now be kept in ignorance no longer, and in Editha Clarendon you behold the Lady Editha Douglas.”

Had a thunder-bolt fallen at the feet of Editha her astonishment would not have been greater; nor was it till the Baron again repeated it that she could give credit to the information, and long did it deprive her of the power of utterance. At length addressing herself to the Baroness, “ My honored mother, still will my tongue use the familiar phrase, the discovery of my birth distresses me beyond the power of utterance. So long accustomed to believe myself your

OWN,

own, how hard do I find it to resign the pleasing delusion."

"Then never do it, Editha; be it at your own discretion to remain our daughter, or to assume the honors of your father's house."

"O never; let me be still Editha Clarendon, I cannot wish for honor more distinguishing."

"Then be it as you please. The Baron too, he will with joy receive the determination, for with sincere reluctance would he resign you."

Lord and Lady Clarendon embraced her, and gave her every assurance of love and protection: her eyes bespoke her gratitude; but the heart of Editha was too much disturbed to listen to the soothing voice of consolation. Accustomed from her birth
to

to regard them as her parents, her heart was pierced at the necessity of resigning the pleasing delusion. She had never been endowed with the gift of intuition; nor did her sensations when she passed portraits of her father father and mother tell her that they were more nearly connected with her birth, than any other of the family one's that decorated the lofty galleries of Clarendon Castle; and had she still remained in ignorance, she would not perhaps have esteemed herself less fortunate.

Melancholy reflections and unwelcome remembrances seemed to spread its baneful influence o'er the bosoms of the little party; to chace which unwelcome visitor, Walter begged permission to salute his new-found kinswoman. His example was followed by the good-humoured Edgar and Sir Raimond, in whose affections the alteration of her situation could produce no change of sentiment.

Not

Not so was it with regard to Walter, for a very short space of time was sufficient to discover that he would have been perfectly as well pleased with the plan of his father's politics, if the discovery of her true state of relationship to his family had taken place previous to the promise of her hand being given to Sir Raimond.

But as the self-same circumstances have various effects on different dispositions, so did it now happen that this transaction produced in the Baron sentiments perfectly the reverse to those entertained by his son. He rejoiced that it was now impossible for her immense fortune ever to appertain to his family, which he would have considered to be liable to interpretations greatly to his own discredit, as it might have been believed he had secluded her, lest she should bestow herself elsewhere. Another consideration was, that if she had ever married a son of his, he must have been under the

VOL. II. K necessity

necessity of avowing her being the offspring of the Lady Constance, a measure which he certainly did not wish to adopt, unless it had been the express wish of the Lady Editha.

By her marriage with Sir Raimond every such avowal was rendered unnecessary; and the Baron rejoiced that she had made a choice so truly deserving.

It is very B.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

ON the following day the Baroneſs propoſed that the young people ſhould pay a viſit to the North Gallery, for the purpoſe of inſpecting thoſe apartments that had occaſioned them ſo much alarm.

The young men warmly approved the motion; and the Baron, by means of the private paſſage, led the way, followed by the ladies with reluctant ſteps.

Editha leaned on the arm of Maude, who would most willingly have excused herself from being of the party, and more than once were nearly retreating, though on the point of receiving that gratification of their so justly awakened curiosity, that they had sighed so long for.

The Baron advanced to a small door, which he endeavoured to open, but the locks, from length of time, was become rusty, and defied every effort; he at last resigned the task to Walter, whose desire of entering was so great, that he more than once begged leave to attempt breaking it open, nor did the request remain unseconded by his companions. The ladies formed an opposition; for Maude was so terrified at the remembrance of her adventure in the Gallery, that was connected with this suite of rooms, that she would willingly have resigned her part in the adventure

venture to have been once more safe in her own chamber.

After repeated exertions, the door at length gave way; the young men looked anxiously over the shoulder of the Baron, eager to enter, though too polite to intrude themselves before him. The scene within was dark and gloomy, and the damp vapour that issued forth compelled them to retreat. After a few minutes the Baron ventured to enter, and unbar one of the casements for air, and the ladies soon after entered, though the young ones failed not to keep each an arm of Lady Clarendon, who smiled at their fears, and at their astonishment, that they should never till now have formed an idea of their being any such method of entrance to the apartments of the North Gallery.

The Baron took from a small cabinet some papers relative to Editha, written by

the hand of Constance, in terms which rendered a doubt of her birth utterly impossible; they retired to a small couch, where they seated themselves to peruse them, and drop the tears of compassion on the very apparent mental affliction of the fair departed writer.

“And now, my friends,” said Lord Clarendon, “I hope you will rest satisfied, that though there has been some reason for your former fears, they are entirely without foundation.”

The looks of Maude did not seem perfectly to accord with the sentiments of her father, and she cast a fearful glance around the desolate apartment; every thing remained exactly as it was when Lady Alva died; and having been so many years suffered to continue in that state, it had contracted an air of solemn melancholy, not altogether prepossessing to a mind naturally
endowed

endowed with a firm belief of supernatural beings.

The bed and hangings, which were truly magnificent, was the same as when they became the right of the Lord Clarendon, and had, by their fashion, occupied their places in the Castle, for at least a century; the furniture was of dark brown cut velvet, curiously embroidered in gold, with select parts of the Roman History: the figures as large as life, and not of the most amiable aspect; it was much decayed by time, and the broad gold fringes and tassels had long since lost their lustre; on one of the large stone seats, that made a deep recess within the casements, lay several articles for working tapestry, an employment in which Lady Alva, as well as most of the ladies of her time, passed many of her solitary hours; a whole length figure of her husband, nearly compleated, was placed before her couch, and appeared

to have been her work, when death put an end to her afflictions, though the thick ivy that hung in profusion round the small Gothic casements, seemed to have rendered all attempts at colouring an absolute impossibility.

In the height of admiration of the performance, they had all crowded close round the portrait of Lord Alva; Maude had negligently seated herself on the chair that was placed before it, and the Baron stood leaning behind her; whether it was from the weight, to which it had long been unaccustomed, and which, indeed, it was almost too much decayed to support, or whether it was the natural effect that damp has upon furniture, the chair had not been many moments occupied, before a violent snap was heard throughout the room.—Maude started from her seat; the Baron, who had not regarded the circumstance, gazed with astonishment at the rapidity with

with which she fled towards the door, and begged to know what had so suddenly disturbed her, while the Baroness kindly invited her to rest herself on the seat she had left, being unconscious what could so disturb her, and believing her to be ill from the bad air of the place; but it would have required much stronger arguments than Lady Clarendon was disposed to make use of, to have induced Maude any more to venture near this object of her terror; nor were the rest of the young part of the company perfectly convinced that what she had heard did not mean something, and the Baroness declared she believed Maude still thought the apartments were the residence of supernatural beings. "It is true, Madam," she replied, "I am hard of faith; not that I, even in the smallest degree, doubt the veracity of the Baron's narrative, but I cannot help fearing Lady Alva may." She cast her eyes on Edith, and seeming to recollect herself, and after two or three

attempts to conclude the sentence, was silent.

"You was thinking of Lady Alva, Maude," said the Baroness, "pray, may we not be informed what you was thinking of her."—"I must beg to be excused; indeed I cannot name it, at least not now, some other time perhaps, but not at present."—"Do not conceal your sentiments on my account, Maude," said Editha, "perhaps my own do but to much accord with them."—"I thought, then, of the night when I was alarmed with Albert de Clare in the passage of the North Gallery; I am sure it was a spirit, for we both saw and heard it, and I fear that something may disturb the peace of Lady Alva."

The Baron started involuntarily, and uttered an ejaculation for the repose of his sister, while Editha shuddered at the idea of her mother being still unhappy.

In

In the whole course of the story, no notice had been taken, or any account given of that mysterious affair, and Sir Raimond ventured to ask the opinion of the Baron with regard to it.

The Baronefs could not forbear a smile. "Come, my Lord," said she, "we may as well make a compleat discovery; for I plainly perceive there is a compact on foot to do it by some means or other; therefore, my Lord, we may as well make a merit of necessity, and acknowledge that this very tremendous apparition was—yourself."

At her request the Baron told them, that wishing much for some person in whom he could confide, for the protection of Editha, if he should die before she was married, he had disclosed the secret to his brother-in-law, Sir Arthur de Clare, during his last visit at Clarendon, and by his advice had

determined, if possible, to influence his Sovereign in her favor.

For this purpose, he seized the opportunity of entering the apartments, accompanied by Sir Arthur, who was the only person, except himself, that had ever been within them, and that the only time since they were first shut up; their business was, he said, to fetch the certificate of his sister's marriage, and her daughter's birth, both of which had been carefully sealed up, and written upon by Lord Alva; and he had taken Sir Arthur with him, that when at any time he presented the papers to King Henry, he might be able to give a perfect account of the state and place they were found in.

"We were," said the Baron, "on the point of returning, when Maude came out of her room, followed by Albert; I made
all

all the haste I could to conceal myself within the door, but Sir Arthur pursued a wiser plan, and while Albert was incumbered with the weight of his companion, he hastily passed them, and returned to the drawing-room, while I continued waiting for their departure to effect my escape.

“ This, however, I did not find altogether so practicable; for on a noise which I was so unfortunate to make, by stumbling over one of the chairs, Albert, much to the credit of his courage, though, perhaps, not of his gallantry, instantly forsook poor Maude, and commenced a general search through every apartment round the gallery.

“ I had no doubt of being secure; for as these doors were known to be always kept fastened, I thought he would certainly pass by them; twice he did as I expected, but Maude, who had just recovered the use
of

of her tongue, assured him that it was at the great doors she had seen the spirit enter. Without hesitation he tried them directly, and finding it give way, was just about to enter, when I pulled the door violently out of his hand, and by throwing down his lamp, eluded every effort he could make to overtake me."

The laugh went strongly against Maude's credulity, though it must be acknowledged she had some degree of reason for it; and as every disagreeable idea was now entirely done away, the apartments were soon after opened, and occupied by Walter; the domestics of the Castle, who knew nothing of what had been told concerning Editha, still regarded them with as much fear as ever; they took care never to pass that way alone, and as they prayed that no harm might betide their young Lord for his temerity, they in secret blamed the Baron and Baroness for exposing him to the hor-

rors of such a place; for though the children might be innocent, certainly my Lord and Lady knew more than they much cared to tell.

The alteration of Editha's birth made none in the sentiments of Sir Raimond, for he had good sense enough to think that no disgrace could possibly be attached to her; and after thanking the Baron in the politest manner for the confidence he had honored him with, he begged him to bestow her hand on him immediately. The preparations for the celebration of their nuptials were soon in a state of forwardness. The Castle was a scene of universal festivity, and mirth and happiness seemed alone to possess the bosoms of the amiable inhabitants of Clarendon.

Yet there was one, and but one, whose approbation was in appearance only. Walter Clarendon, from infancy accustomed to believe

believe Editha his sister, though fully sensible of her beauty and understanding, had never condescended to favor her with any great degree of his attentions, not that Walter had any kind of dislike to either of his fair sisters, but it was Gothic and unfashionable for a young Cavalier of quality to shew any particular regard for relations; they were, he knew and acknowledged, both extremely beautiful, and as such he was proud of exhibiting them to his gay companions, and further than that he never gave himself any trouble about them; yet had this amiable young gentleman, in less than three weeks, contrived to fall desperately in love with Editha, and he determined to spare no pains that might obtain her; it was true she was on the eve of marriage with a man too of her own selection from amongst numerous admirers, but that was a trifle,

Nothing's impossible to a mind resolv'd,

Was

Was the sentiments of Walter on every occasion that ventured to oppose any of his favourite plans; and he ventured to intimate pretty openly to the Baroness, that Lord Clarendon had treated him extremely ill, in having so long concealed his true kindred to Editha, merely to prevent his paying his addresses to her, and securing to the family the acquisition of immense fortune, which, as she had so long been left in the care of the Baron, he felt himself, as his heir, entitled to possess.

. Many had been the plans that had presented themselves to his imagination, in order to break off this intended alliance, but they had all been rejected as impracticable, and he almost began to think he had for once set his heart on an object that was unattainable, which would, no doubt, have been the case, but for an event as unexpected as distressing.

One

One night when the Hall resounded with the songs of mirth, and the illustrious and chearful visitors graced the banquet of the Lord Clarendon, an universal dismay spread itself through the happy circle, occasioned by the sudden and severe indisposition of the Baroness; all was in an instant hurry and confusion; the disordered steps of the other visitants, as they passed and repassed, attracted the attentions of the dancers in the adjoining gallery; they enquired, but in vain, what was the occasion of the confusion; no one was sufficiently at leisure to give an explanation; the party was immediately broke up, and on entering the supper rooms, were too soon acquainted with the extent of their misfortune.

Lady Clarendon had long been subject to a very disagreeable cough, which her physicians had assured her was far from being dangerous; her exertions on that evening had brought it on with uncommon

mon violence, and the consequence was the bursting of a blood vessel; every possible assistance was immediately procured; it was, alas! destined to be fruitless; and ere the morning's dawn, she resigned her breath in the arms of her distracted Lord, blessing himself and her afflicted children.

The deep and settled melancholy that took possession of Lord Clarendon communicated itself to every inhabitant of the Castle; he seldom or ever conversed with any one but Father Austin, and passed the day entirely confined to his own chamber, except sometimes at dinner, when he desired the company of his children, but this was an exertion always attended with additional pain, and generally dispensed with; for, in reality, it rather tended to increase than diminish their afflictions, by calling to their minds more forcibly, if possible, than ever, the irreparable loss they had sustained.

The

The ladies were therefore very seldom visible, they admitted no company ; nor was even Sir Raimond excepted from the general denial : their time was chiefly spent in the apartments of each other : and truly melancholy did they pass their hours. The sorrows of Maude admitted not of consolation ; nor did the no less afflicted Editha attempt to offer any : she felt it was impossible, for her heart told her that till now she had never lost her mother ; and it is doubtful which of them most lamented the unexpected and untimely fate of this truly amiable and benevolent woman.

Walter, if ever he loved any thing on earth except himself, had certainly sincerely loved the Baronefs, and most unfeignedly did lament her loss : he had indeed almost forgotten Editha ; but as his sorrows gave way to time, his recollection pointed out to him that he had not yet done any thing that tended even in the most distant degree

to

to effect the grand object of his design. Sir Raimond had, by dint of his repeated intreaties, again obtained permission to renew his visits at the Castle; to which the ladies had been induced to consent, not only for the pleasure of his company, but from a hope that the Baron would be in some measure drawn from his solitude, which now began to be so rigid, that the greatest fears were entertained not only for his health, but for the preservation of his intellects.

The event in some measure answered their expectations, for he thought it indispensable to be more frequently present than had of late been his custom; for to admit of the ladies always receiving Sir Raimond and his brother, argued a want of hospitality on his side, and of propriety on theirs; and much as he disliked to mingle with society, he felt that it would have been the excess of severity to command them to resign

sign their rational and long-encouraged hopes, because he was unfortunate and unhappy, by degrees he became, if not more reconciled, at least more placid.

A languid kind of content began to dawn once more through the family, but it was not destined to continue long ; the spring now advancing, our illustrious and warlike sovereign Henry V. began to think of embarking on his expedition against France, on which occasion Sir Raimond and Edgar Fitzalwin had, amongst a number of the young nobility of England, voluntarily offered him their services.

About this time the royal mandate arrived at the mansion of Sir Raimond, to require him to join the king within the expiration of three weeks, if he was still disposed to attach himself to his fortunes.

Though

Though the heart of Raimond whispered him to remain near Clarendon and his destined wife—honor revolted at the inglorious thought, and he returned, in the most loyal terms, an answer to the king to say the lives and fortunes of himself and brother were at his command; and that he might depend on his honor as a true and faithful liegeman to his majesty, to attend him earlier than the time appointed.

Never, perhaps, had more unwelcome news reached the hearing of Raimond, not that his soul shrunk at the approach of danger, for in no form could death appear terrible to him, except accompanied with dishonor; but to leave Editha, to leave her too at a time that her heart was a prey to grief and melancholy, when his attentions might perhaps have beguiled her of some part of her sorrows, was a thought too painful to be endured. Could he have received her hand before he took his leave of her, perhaps

perhaps for ever, his grief would have been lightened ; but to have named such a proposal, would, he well knew, have incurred her displeasure : she would have felt it as a slight to the memory of the Baroness ; and Sir Raimond felt himself obliged to resign the idea even before he had well formed it.

Various sensations did this intelligence occasion at Clarendon Castle. Editha, tho' she felt much, said little ; though she trembled at the thoughts of the dangers he was going to encounter, yet fearful that her fears, if expressed, might induce him to continue with her, she nobly resolved to confine to her own bosom the inexpressible pain the parting cost her.

Maude very sincerely regretted his departure, nor did she put herself to any trouble to conceal her sentiments : she felt that Lord Clarendon would soon relapse into his usual melancholy ; for
though

though strongly attached to her brother, and in some instances almost blind to his failings, it had not escaped her observation that the general tenor of his disposition was too perfectly opposite to that of his father, to render them much attached to each other's society; and even if they had, Walter very rarely confined himself from the pursuit of his pleasures for the accommodation of any body: added to this, there was perhaps another cause for regret, almost unknown to herself, or at least a cause that she took some degree of trouble not to believe; this was no less formidable than an unusual portion of regard that had for some months been stealing imperceptibly into her heart of Edgar Fitzalwin.

Long accustomed to pass her hours almost entirely with him, her heart was insensibly become strongly attached. Walter cared little for the society of a sister, however amiable; and Sir Raimond was too

VOL. II.

L

much

much devoted to Editha, to be a suitable companion to the lively Maude : all other visitors of the male kind had been, since the mournful event of Lady Clarendon's death, excluded from visiting at the Castle ; and the sprightly disposition of the amiable and insinuating Edgar seemed to constitute him, and him alone, to be the proper companion for Maude ; and a similarity of diversions and pursuits told him that Maude was the only woman in the world to be the companion of Edgar Fitz-Alwin.

They were the constant partners of each other in the dance, because neither ever gave up till every body else was tired. If Edgar diverted himself with arrows, as long as he did not shoot living animals, Maude was his companion ; for neither him nor Walter could exceed her in the management of the bow : if she sung, Edgar sung with her, or after her, which did as well for him ; and though by chance he spoiled the
ballet,

ballet, Maude was never angry long : in short, they were always together, and always happy ; for if Edgar had her for his companion, he cared not, though he loved them all very sincerely, how any other of the party disposed of themselves.

It is not to be wondered at that two spirits so perfectly congenial should soon become attached to each other. Edgar had long since been conscious that his heart was no longer in his own possession ; but feeling himself no equal match for Maude, he had, however hard it might be to endure, imposed silence on himself, till fortune should point out to him the means of offering his hand without the fear of imputed presumption.

• He well knew that the affection of his brother was such as would have obviated any difficulties that arose from want of fortune, had he been made acquainted with

them ; but Edgar loved not dependence, and had already many obligations to his brother, which he felt it ungenerous to add to.

As to his provision, though far more than adequate for his own occasions, he well knew it would never support a daughter of the Baron Clarendon in a manner suitable to her rank ; and he determined never to ask her to accept him till it could be done without subjecting her to the smallest inconvenience.

Edgar had not an atom of vanity in his whole composition ; but he could not resign the pleasing hope of being beloved by the enchanting Maude ; and he knew her temper well enough to be convinced she would not hesitate a moment to give up splendor for the man who was fortunate enough to gain possession of her heart ; and fearful of leading her into such a mode of
conduct,

conduct, he determined never to put it in her power.

Maude could not help observing the pleasure he took in her society ; nor was she insensible to the preference she felt for Edgar : yet unconscious that she loved him, she persuaded herself that the pleasure she felt in his company was only owing to a similarity of temper ; and without farther enquiry, because farther enquiry might have led to indisputable conviction, she continued to sing, to ride, and to play chess with Edgar as usual.

This mutual passion, which had hitherto received neither interruption or grief, was now destined to produce pain in the bosoms of its possessors. Maude no longer found it possible to conceal from herself the nature of her partiality : she grew melancholy, and Edgar was the same ; but every one was too much interested in their own con-

cerns, to bestow any degree of attention to the very great alteration that had taken place in their deportment.

As the time previous to their departure was so short, Lord Clarendon invited them to pass the rest of it at Clarendon Castle; and the temptation came in a shape too pleasing to admit a thought of refusing.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

THE youths were now busily employed in making preparations for their approaching expedition, nor were the ladies permitted to be idle.

Sir Raimond had prevailed on Editha to give him permission to assume her colours, and she had undertaken to decorate his accoutrements herself; and as the time was short, she would willingly have engaged the assistance of Maude in the performance, but her time was already otherwise disposed

of. Edgar had so well contrived to gain the Baron to his interest, that Lord Clarendon declared he thought it would be singularly unkind not to equip him as well as Raimond; for the gay young cavalier had protested he would not go to the wars unless his mantle had to boast the work of some fair lady; and Maude would not for the universe have kept a single arm in inactivity for want of a little condescension on her side: and she had agreed to assist him on the occasion, not you may be sure from any desire of obliging Edgar, but from the laudable motive of serving her country; and though he did not tell her his heart was hers, she was so delighted to find he did not give a preference to any other lady, that the work went forward with rapidity and elegance. The ladies generally assisted each other, and many a half-concealed sigh did it cost them, as it drew near to a conclusion, to think how soon perhaps the wearers might be mingled with the dust.

Walter

Walter could not help thinking fortune was more his friend than the little attention he bestowed on her favors merited. During the time that Raimond could not be received at the Castle, Walter no longer having the presence of a rival to fear, had lost with the difficulty the desire of success; and though, from the privilege of relationship, he almost daily beheld Editha, he had never mentioned his love. He now rejoiced at the consequence of his negligence, for he began to perceive that such a declaration would only have ensured him her displeasure and tacit refusal; an observation which any other man would most probably have made long before.

In consequence of this very wise discovery, he determined without delay to set about a plan of operations with a greater degree of circumspection.

For this purpose he engaged to his interest, by means of bribery, one of the attendants of Sir Raimond, who from the nature of his employment, and a length of supposed services, was most in the confidence of his master ; yet as long as concealment of his intentions was possible, Walter intended not to trust much to the fidelity of his new ally, for he wisely considered that as a trifling sum had tempted him to betray Sir Raimond, the hopes of obtaining one a little larger might induce him to betray him.

He had long observed his man to be very attentive to Amabel, and that apparently his attentions were not unwillingly received ; for jealousy had tempted Walter to become a scrutinizing observer of every one that appeared to be much in her good graces ; for Amabel was far from being disagreeable in her person, and Walter had
spared

spared no pains to convince her he thought so.

He had never since he was grown up led so retired a life as since he returned to the Castle, and even now it was by no inclination of his own; but of every custom that could possibly evince respect for the memory of his lady, the Baron was rigid in the observance; and any attempt to introduce company at the castle within the accustomed limits, Walter was well convinced would have been a fruitless attempt; therefore, for the sake of a little amusement, he had

“Often descended from himself, and talked of love.”

To Amabel, whom he doubted not would think herself greatly honored by his notice, and as the adventure promised what he termed good amusement, he had taken some small degree of trouble to obtain her

for his mistress, though without effect ; and this rejection of his offers he had at last the mortification to discover arose from a previous attachment to Osbert.

To be rivalled by a simple vassal was, to be sure, something humiliating ; but it was preferable to believing that any one whom he condescended to address could possibly reject him, while her heart was disengaged.

In this idea of her attachment he was, however, wonderfully mistaken ; but Amabel finding she had no better method of getting rid of his impertinent importunities, suffered him to remain in his error, and trusted to chance to find some favorable opportunity of discarding her more humble admirer.

In consequence of this she was sometimes obliged to appear not displeased with the assiduities of Osbert ; and as she was blessed with

with as little consideration as any body, she thought, when she thought any thing about it, that the departure of Sir Raimond would be the departure of him also, and that in the intervening time it could do nobody any harm; for which reason she resolved to make his folly her amusement for the time being.

Walter finding her what he called blind to her good fortune, at length grew tired of the pursuit, and though heartily vexed that he could not succeed in duping a girl who every body always thought above half light-headed, he consoled himself with reflecting that the circumstance might possibly be, by dint of a little good management, turned to infinite advantage with regard to his designs on Editha.

In consequence of the service he might be of in the progress of that affair, Osbert was immediately taken into the pay of
Walter;

Walter ; and the first service he was commanded to perform was to convey the complete dress worn that day by Sir Raimond into the chamber of the Lady Editha, and leave it there all night. The order was punctually obeyed, and as soon as the family was retired for the night, ventured to knock softly at the door of Editha's anti-chamber, under a pretence of wanting to have a little conference with Amabel. The event exactly answered Walter's wishes. Editha was retired, and Amabel, angry at the intrusion, and fearful of incurring the displeasure of her mistress, instantly bade him be gone ; but Osbert knew too well what he was about to go immediately, and before he retired contrived to deposit the cloaths in the apartment on the first thing that stood near him.

Amabel, too much exasperated to notice what he did, never observed the circumstance, and took the first opportunity of his being

being without door, to make it fast against him, and passed on as light as she could step to her own chamber, so full of vexation, that she saw not the vest of Raimond, though she passed close by it.

In the mean time Walter was rejoicing in the success of his project, and enjoying the confusion that would, he flattered himself, in a few hours be the result of it.

In the morning he did not fail to call on Edgar, in his way to the breakfast room; he found him busily employed in rubbing the rust from the sword of his father, for he had bestowed that which he wore himself on his younger son, as being in those days generally the greatest part of the portion of a younger brother, and Edgar thought no other so well worth wearing.

As he had mentioned to his brother the night before to what purpose he proposed

to

to devote the morning, Sir Raimond had not asked him to be his companion in a strole through the woods, which he proposed to take at day-break ; neither, by some accident or other, was Walter acquainted with his intention.

After a short time Edgar consigned the sword to its scabbard, though not without many an additional improvements to its brightness, for every spot reproached him that he had so long neglected it. As soon as he was ready, the designing Walter proposed that they should call for Raimond. Edgar agreed to it ; and away they went to interrupt his morning dreams, which they agreed he would not thank them for, for no doubt they were of Editha ; but perhaps had Edgar been dreaming of Maude, he would not have thanked his brother for a similar interruption.

On

On reaching his apartment they were told he was already up and out, but whether he was gone they did not know. Walter suggested an idea that the ladies might perhaps be gone with him, and that as they passed near their apartments he would enquire, for if they were, it was probable he would not go far; and Edgar and him would take their horses and endeavour to join the party, and return home together.

The proposal met with the consent of Edgar, for Maude might probably be of the party; but Osbert, who heard the arrangement, took all possible means to insinuate that it would be fruitless, as he was certain, though he gave no reason why, that they would neither meet Sir Raimond nor the Lady Editha. Edgar enquired what he meant; but Osbert, who had been taught his lesson beforehand, took care, though with the utmost appearance of respect, to give such answers only as wrapped the accidental

cidental absence of his master in a mysterious obscurity.

Tired with a fruitless enquiry as to what road they must pursue, they passed on, and Walter, taking the advantage of the privilege of relationship, knocked at the door of Maude's apartment, the better to disguise his reason for visiting that of Editha: she had been long up, and they found her, to her infinite embarrassment, employed in finishing the scarf of Edgar, with tears glittering in her eyes, and that intended for Sir Raimond lying neglected by her side.

Walter laughed at the mournful cast of her countenance, and gave no few insinuations that he more than suspected the cause of it. To which she replied, that the unexpected noise he made at the door had made her prick her fingers. Edgar was pained to observe the interest he had in her heart, for he penetrated, or at least he thought

thought he did so, the cause of her melancholy, and forgetful of his wonted caution, he imprinted a kiss on her hand; which Maude, though retiring in order to escape further observation, forgot to withdraw from him. Recollecting herself, she told her brother that she was certain Editha was not yet risen, and saying she must dress to appear at breakfast, took her leave of them in a manner so perfectly embarrassed, that a modern country girl would blush to be accused of.

Edgar thought no more of his brother; him and his concerns were alike forgotten, and he followed Walter, not because he wished for information, but because he did not recollect what he was doing.

As soon as the door of Editha's anti-chamber was opened to Walter, his attention was most painfully recalled, when looking over the shoulder of his companion,

nion, he beheld, as he thought, his brother extended on the couch.

At the same moment, Amabel, who had not before been in the apartment, glanced her eyes on the vest, and her confusion became so obvious, that it was impossible not to notice it. "Your Lady is not then visible?" said Walter.—"No, my Lord."—"Of course, then, you cannot inform us of Sir Raimond Fitz-Alwin?"—"No, indeed, my Lord, I—I cannot; Sir Raimond never visits—never visits at my Lady's apartments."

Walter turned from the door, and Edgar, taking another look, plainly beheld his brother's hat and feathers, and his murrey-coloured shoes, which stood by the side of the couch, he could no longer doubt of Raimond's being there; and the haste with which Amabel closed the door,
and

and the caution she had shewn in holding it as little open as possible, confirmed it.

They proceeded in silence to the breakfast-room, but the Baron was not yet returned from Chapel.—“It is of no use to ride now,” said Walter, “and I fancy there is not many of the family absent from the Castle, what think you, Edgar, of trying our skill in archery, till the good company assembles?”

“I do not feel myself good company this morning, Walter; I will pass an hour or two in the library, but let me not detain you.”

“Well, then, farewell, by that time I shall most probably return; I leave you to your meditations.”

But he well knew those meditations would be painful—That Raimond should presume to enter the apartments of the female part of the family alone, and at so early

early hour, was an infringement on established custom, and a breach of hospitality utterly incomprehensible; nor was it less so that Editha, whom he had always regarded as a perfect pattern of prudence, should permit it.

Yet the conduct of Walter was still more extraordinary than any thing he had ever met with, for he was confident that he must entertain the same suspicions as he did; yet Walter, instead of resenting, seemed disposed to laugh at it, and with difficulty did Edgar restrain telling him his sentiments; but a moment's reflection told him he should perhaps exasperate him against his brother. In the midst of these unpleasant thoughts the Baron entered, but as he said nothing on the subject, Edgar concluded he was yet uninformed of the circumstance, and therefore he was silent in regard to it.

Walter

Walter had, instead of walking, when he left Edgar in the library, been to give some new instructions to Osbert, in consequence of which he had fetched away the vest before the return of Sir Raimond; he pretended to Amabel that he had forgot them, and begged her on no account to acknowledge his carelessness, as it would much displease Sir Raimond; and Amabel, who had as much reason to fear his visit being discovered as he had, readily promised, and very sincerely intended to perform it, by denying any knowledge of the whole transaction, if she was asked about it.

As soon as Editha was dressed, she hastened to Maude's apartment, where they mutually expressed their astonishment at the visitors they had had that morning, and still more so at the reason of those visits, or that any body should at that hour
expect

expect to find Sir Raimond, with her; and after a short conversation on the subject, the ladies descended together to the breakfast-room, little suspecting the disagreeable circumstances they were there destined to encounter.

C H A P. XVI.

THEY had not been long assembled before they were joined by Raimond and Walter, who returned to the Castle together; the ladies took but little notice of the latter, for they felt but little pleased with him; and Edgar, though he said not much to either, regarded both with looks of evident dissatisfaction. The Baron paid but small attention to their unusual gravity, yet he felt that they were not altogether so sociable as usual; it was seldom that he joined much in conversation; but at

VOL. II. M present,

present, he knew not why, he wished to promote one, and totally ignorant of the disagreement his question would be the occasion of, he casually asked Walter where he had met Sir Raimond ? “ I found him further off, Sir, than I could possibly have expected to find him ; I think it was behind Saint Mark’s Priory ; was it not Raimond ? ”

“ I believe it was ; but I have been considerably further.”

“ Trust me you made good haste then, for you left the Castle late, did he not, Edgar ? ”—Perhaps he did, Sir, but you may remember I was not his companion ; therefore, in your disputes, I beg not to be included ; Lady Editha let me occupy that seat by you ; their quarrels will be better at a distance.”

“ We are not going to quarrel, Edgar,” said Sir Raimond, “ Walter, I dare say, intended no offence.”

“ None,

“None, Raimond, none; but if you left the Castle,” said he, with a significant look, “I was mistaken.”

“I believe you are mistaken, Sir; I think four o’clock is tolerably early.”

“True, it is so; but you, I fancy, was not out at four this morning.”—Edgar left his seat in disorder. “Do you leave us so abruptly, Edgar?” said Editha, “you are not well.”—“Perfectly well, I thank you, Madam.”

“Madam,” repeated Maude, “Madam, pri’thee, what new system of politeness is this?”

“Why, child,” cried Walter, “why will you be inquisitive, as well as myself? you might observe the discontent my curiosity has occasioned, without imitating the example.

“Upon my honor, Walter,” replied Sir Raimond, “I can answer for one, that your enquiries have not offended; for if it is any satisfaction to know how my morn-

ing has been disposed of, I will give you a clear account; though, trust me, I believe it will not be thought worth attending to.—First, to begin, I left the Castle some minutes before four—”

“Then I have certainly lost my understanding; for I, surely, saw you in Editha’s chamber at seven.”

“Where?” said the Baron.

“In Editha’s chamber, my Lord—Was it not cousin?”

“If you, Sir, are so well informed,” replied Editha, not a little offended, “it is unnecessary to enquire of me, nor shall I take the pains to contradict you.”

“Well, I sincerely beg your pardon, good folks; lovers must meet sometimes, and Edgar and I were certainly impertinent to intrude on private parties—Edgar, do you say nothing to excuse yourself?”

“I have already told you, Walter, I wish not to interfere on the subject, therefore you must excuse me.”

“And

“ And you must excuse me, Sir,” said Sir Raimond, addressing Walter, “ if I am not so passive as my brother, and confess my curiosity is raised, and must be satisfied—What mean you by your insinuations of interrupting me this morning?—I know not any where that we have this day met, except an hour since in the path-way of the wood; for myself, I care not what may be the purport of your words, but when a lady is reflected on, through any misconstruction of my conduct, I hold myself obliged to ask, and to enforce an explanation.”

“ My meaning then,” said Walter, “ is, that calling at your apartments this morning, you was not to be found.”

“ That, as I take it, Sir, is not miraculous.”

“ Not in the least, Sir; but it was rather singular to find you at Editha’s, and I believe your brother thought the same, tho’, perhaps, it may be nothing uncommon.”

“ But I should hope, and believe it is very uncommon,” replied the Baron. “ Sir Raimond, what may be the meaning of all this story ?—Maude, retire child ; Editha is not well.”

The ladies instantly rose to quit the breakfast room ; Edgar offered his arm to Edith, but she refused it, nor did his politeness meet a more welcome reception from his sister ; for though they were not a little astonished at Walter’s assertion, the silence of Edgar, which certainly seemed to agree with him, was equally inexplicable. The Baron, by Sir Raimond’s desire, made every possible enquiry relative to the circumstance ; and amongst other things, Osbert was sent for, and, without being informed why, was asked by Sir Raimond, if he recollected at what hour he rose that morning, but Osbert had most unfortunately forgotten, and appeared to think he did his master an acceptable piece of service

vice by this convenient loss of memory. Walter persisted in his assertions, and Edgar, when obliged to speak, which was at the desire of his brother, owned, with reluctance, that he was of the same opinion.

The Baron was much displeased, not that he suspected Editha of being guilty of the smallest impropriety, or Sir Raimond of any other than the most honorable intentions, but a breach of established custom and propriety was not easily to be excused, for propriety was, in that Gothic age, more thought than talked of; now, to be sure, thanks to a little fashionable refinement, the case is wonderfully altered.

Sir Raimond, whose soul ill brooked the slightest hint that tended to traduce his honor, was with difficulty prevailed on not to resent the injury with his sword; but the Baron insisted it should be so, and his word was not to be disputed.

But, notwithstanding the degree of success that had hitherto attended Walter's wishes, they were fortunately destined to meet with an unexpected interruption.

Amabel, whose affection would not suffer her to be an unconcerned observer of her lady's mortification, readily acknowledged by what means the vest and accoutrements of Sir Raimond came to be in her apartments; that is, as far as she was acquainted with them; for as to the compact between Walter and Osbert, she was, like every one else, totally unsuspecting.

Maude flew to her father with the intelligence, while satisfaction sparkled in her eyes at Editha's triumph. Walter apologized for having entertained suspicions to the discredit of her or Sir Raimond, by saying, that he felt concerned for the honor of his family. Sir Raimond accepted his excuse, and admitted that he had certainly
had

had some appearance of reason for his doubts, while Lord Clarendon gravely advised his son not to speak in future on such slight conviction.

Thus terminated in nothing more than the mortification of an hour, a plot which Walter had flattered himself would make an irreparable breach in the friendship of his father and Raimond; and not only the failure had he to lament, but also that the attempt was likely more closely to cement it.

But amidst his disappointments, Walter had still one reason to rejoice; he had escaped not only detection but suspicion; and not discouraged, though vexed at the delay, he determined to make one more attempt, at least,

To part those souls which love had join'd.

M 5

And

And soon did his prolific imagination present him with an opportunity.

While Lady Clarendon survived, Walter had found it no very easy matter to avoid her penetrating observations, and he had, for that reason, been very careful, that whatever deceits he practised, should come as little as possible beneath her eye; for though, from the excess of her affection, she was generally the last to notice his misconduct, he well knew he could never have carried into execution so daring a project as he had now at heart, while Editha resided under her protection; but from the Baron he had little to apprehend; not accustomed, for a considerable length of years, to mingle with the world, he was much more addicted to the study of books than men; his own heart was the throne of honor, and he seldom suspected any one of deceit till he had felt it; he had left the world more in momentary than settled disgust,

gust, and circumstances had contributed to keep him from returning; yet had he often thought with pleasure on the companions of his youth, and thought he had too hastily forsaken many amiable men, because one had injured him; by nature his heart was attached to the most social and unreserved friendship with all mankind; and to every stranger that visited the Castle of Clarendon, his heart gave hospitable and cordial welcome.

From such a disposition, it is no wonder that Walter should persuade himself he had little fear of detection to apprehend; for he knew, or at least he fancied, that the Baron believed him to be every thing that his fondest hopes could wish him.

The time now drew near to a conclusion that was to separate, and perhaps for ever, the fascinated Sir Raimond from his beloved Editha; one little week was all that re-

mained, ere he must bid adieu to the walls of Clarendon ; and often did he venture to hint his wishes to be permitted to call Edith his previous to his departure, but he found not only the Baron, but herself, so averse to any proposal that evinced the slightest disrespect to the Baroness, that he was compelled to resign the hope.

The day previous to that fixed for their departure, the young men received from the fair hands of Maude and Editha the accoutrements they had promised ; the vest of Raimond was of silver tissue, with a grass-green jacket, curiously wrought with silver flower, an elegant scarf of light lilac was fastened on the left shoulder by a knot of brilliants, and fell gracefully below the right arm ; the fringe was silver, with large tassels of the same, his buskins were of the same colour and materials as the scarf.

An

An immense quantity of snow-white plumes played gracefully over his polished steel helmet, in which was placed a lilac and silver glove, the gift of Edith; but he that day received another scarcely less valuable, for the Baron presented him with a contract, in which Editha promised, with his consent, to become the wife of Raimond on his return, if he should then demand her. Raimond returned her the most unfeigned thanks; and, happy in this indisputable proof of attachment, he felt that no power on earth could deprive him of her.

Walter Clarendon was present when the Baron gave the contract, and any other man would have felt assured that nothing could now be done to break through so sacred an engagement, but despair seldom reached the heart of Walter, and he, almost in the same instant, determined to
make

make it the instrument of his designs against the peace of its happy possessor.

The gentlemen highly applauded the taste that was displayed in Raimond's dress, nor was Edgar's inferior; his vest and jacket was of a bright light yellow satin, the jacket quilted, and ornamented with silver, with a royal purple and silver mantle; his helmet was like his brother's, of plain steel, with plumes of white, and his shield, which was of his own fancy, displayed on the center a resplendant star, and the motto of, "*I will first deserve her,*" set in amethysts.

Every one endeavoured to appear cheerful, but the attempt was vain; the young people had every one separate, though, perhaps, similar reason, and the Baron grieved to lose the company of two young men, the natural amiableness of whose dispositions

positions rendered them dearer to his heart than even their long acquaintance.

Walter had declared his intention of accompanying the young Fitz-Alwins to the metropolis; and as he had lately received an invitation from Albert de Clare to be present at his nuptials, that had been till now postponed, in compliment to Lady Clarendon, he proposed to avail himself of the double pleasure of taking the latest leave possible of his young friends, and complimenting Albert.

The morning dawned unwelcome that was to witness the departure, and they took their leave of Clarendon with a regret, which nothing could render endurable but the hope of returning to claim the reward of their valour. The Baron attended them to the Castle gates, and he went not alone, for Editha hesitated not to take a last look at Raimond; she had acknowledged her partiality,

partiality, and was above practising the affectation of indifference at such an hour. Maude followed her example, and received the farewell salute of Raimond without hesitation; to Edgar she extended her hand, but was hastily about to withdraw it, as having done too much; ardently did he wish to avail himself of the opportunity of imprinting a farewell kiss, but somehow it so happened, that his courage failed him, and he followed his brother with reluctant steps, while his last looks lingered on the face of Maude.

Maude had flattered herself that he would before he left her solicit her for some token of regard, but he had departed without making the request, and this evident proof of indifference she determined to requite, by ceasing to regret his absence, yet all the pride that she could summon to her aid, and in truth, upon occasion, that was no small portion, was insufficient to sustain

sustain the resolution, and the unbidden sigh, would often agitate her bosom.

The Baron soon relaxed into his former solitary habits, and the ladies passed the greatest part of the day in their apartments, employed in working in tapestry the wars of Edward the Third, assisted by their female attendants. Editha sometimes took her late neglected rambles to the neighbouring rocks, where she beguiled the hours by singing melancholy songs to her harp; and Maude, whom nothing would formerly have detained there, even so long as

While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred,

Was now her unsolicited companion; and while Editha sang the dangers that await the adventurous youths, who seek in fields of death the wreaths of glory, her voice would join the mournful tale, and her tears fall as fast at the idea, but she said they

they fell for Raimond, and Editha doubted not the assertion, for she loved him herself too sincerely, not to thank Maude for the interest she took in his welfare; but had she not been too much absorbed in her own reflections to notice the alteration in her companion, she might long since have discovered that Edgar was become the arbitrator of all her thoughts and actions; no longer was she the giddy heedless girl, thoughtless and forgetful of every thing; the young cavaliers might pass unnoticed under the terrace, nor would Maude turn her head to look at them, for she no longer sighed to leave the Castle of Clarendon, but, on the contrary, the walls that encircled its lofty towers, seemed also to become the boundary of all her hopes and wishes.

Amongst the numerous visitors that frequented the Castle, it is no wonder that many should feel, and confess the power of her attractions; but she had, though
without

without any avowed attachment, constantly declined the acceptance of every offer, for in that respect the Baron always permitted her to follow her own inclination, yet he had began to think she carried her singularity too far, in rejecting alliances, not only suitable in point of rank and fortune, but rendered more so by the personal merits of the possessors, yet he forbore to expostulate, and rested contented, in the hope that time might make her what he called more reasonable.

Upwards of a month had now elapsed since Raimond bade adieu to Clarendon, but it was with a promise, that if destiny should bring him near the habitation of the Baron, that he would not pass it; they had heard the forces were on the point of embarking; and as it was unknown on what part of the French coast they were to make their attack, it was thought more than probable they might sail round that
part

part of England ; in consequence of which the fair maids were indefatigable in their attendance on the sea-side, which was not more than a mile from the Castle.

In one of these excursions they perceived, at a distance, a numerous fleet, and one vessel that had left the rest was making fast to shore ; hope whispered that it might be the Fitz-Alwin's, and they waited, in hopes of its reaching the beach, till the moon, which rose in majestic splendor, was the only light they had to assist them in gaining the path that was to lead them homewards, and even of this they were soon deprived, for in a few moments, from a bright and lovely evening, it became on the sudden rough and turbulent ; the moon was veiled from their sight by thick and impenetrable clouds, and every appearance denoted the approach of a tremendous storm. In this situation they knew not what course to pursue ; their way
to

to the Castle was short ; but it was thickly beset with dangers, that they trembled to think of encountering ; the readiest road was straight before them, and long did they endeavour to encourage each other to descend, but neither had the spirit to take the lead, for it terminated, they well knew, in the skirts of an immense forest, totally uninhabited, except by robbers, who, as report said, frequently assembled there in the dusk of the evening ; and the report, whether true or false, had long been sufficiently forcible to deter any other persons from frequenting that side of the rocks.

A moment's reflection was enough to deter them from this dangerous enterprize, and they determined to seek the secret path by which they usually ascended ; but even there, though the dangers were comparatively small, they were truly alarming ; for though they had no fears of interruption, they well knew that the least incautious

tious step must consign them to inevitable fate.

Terrified at their situation, they continued to wander on the rocks till they were totally out of their knowledge; and still continuing to advance, in hopes of finding some place where they might descend with safety, Editha suddenly beheld a violent flashing of light, which she at first believed to be lightning; but, on its continuance, their fears suggested to them, that they had wandered near the secret abode of some robbers, who might have fixed on that secluded spot as a secure residence, as being rendered safe by the innumerable difficulties of access by which it was surrounded.

C H A P. XVII.

IMPELLED as much by fear as curiosity, Maude determined to step cautiously forward, and, if possible, discover what was the occasion of so extraordinary an appearance in a place which they had always believed to be totally uninhabited.

With light and trembling step she walked slowly to the place where the light had appeared strongest, but it grew gradually fainter, and left her almost without a guide; suddenly the sound of many voices struck
on

on her ear, and she stopped, fearful of having already ventured too far, when a strong gleam of light again flashed on the rock, and discovered to her the unknown danger of her situation ; she was on the very brink of the precipice, and had she advanced one step further must inevitably have been entombed in the sea, that rolled roughly at its tremendous base ; she returned her thanks to Heaven for its protection, and felt assured of safety, but their situation rendered it necessary for her to act as well as think, for her fair affrighted friend was incapable of doing either ; it instantly occurred to Maude, to observe, if possible, who was on the beach beneath the rock, and if they appeared to be any thing but robbers, endeavour to obtain their assistance, for she was now fully convinced the noise proceeded from thence, and it was probable that the vessel, which had been the object that brought into her present dilemma, might have effected her landing in the creek.

Inspired

Inspired by the new-born hope that this idea had given birth to, she sat down on the rock, and leaning over, beheld a little coasting vessel safely anchored below, while the greatest part of the crew were disembarking by torch light.

Struck by the picturesque beauty of the scene, Maude heard not the plaintive voice of Editha, who, being unable to keep pace with her, had been left seated on another part of the rock, while Maude went upon discoveries; but Maude had forgot the terror she must feel at being divided from her, and was so wrapt in meditation of how to gain any advantage from what she saw, that her name had often been repeated ere she attended to it.

Fear of discovering their situation, till she had consulted Editha on the safety of the measure, determined her to seek her in silence, rather than answer; but it was with

difficulty she found her, for Edith, distracted with her fears, had left her station, and never reflecting that, perhaps, she either could not hear, or did not dare to answer, she entertained no other idea, but that Maude had fallen from the rock, and was for ever lost, or had met with some one that had forced her away, for fear of her discovering their habitation.

As soon as Editha was tolerably recovered, they ventured together to the place from whence Maude had beheld the ship, where they continued for some time in debating the best method to be adopted. The wind, which was extremely rough, now and then wafted to their ears some indistinct sentences from the hoarse voices of the mariners, but much more frequently did it bear the sound in an opposite direction.

Of

Of this observation, which had at first, for want of reflection, greatly distressed them, Editha resolved to avail herself, and call to them, for let the danger ¹⁷⁹⁰ which it might expose them be ever so great, it could not, in her opinion, be more alarming than that which they already had to encounter. Oft did she repeat the call, and watch with anxious eyes for its effect, but as often had they the pain to observe it was unheard.

Unwilling to give up, they continued in the repetition, and had at last the satisfaction to perceive they had not called in vain; they were answered ¹⁷⁹¹ more than once, but could not discover the purport of the words.

Some of the sailors at last mounted with their torches on the masts, and, by the light which they threw round, discovered, though imperfectly, that there were people

on the rocks who wanted assistance, and by their voices were females.

Consideration being no part of their creed, they were no sooner satisfied on that point, than the word for a general search was given, and in a few moments the ladies beheld them rapidly descending the sides of the ship, and searching round the rocks for some place to ascend by. Two or three appeared to take the lead, and by the track they pursued, it was evident they were not strangers to the place.

It is impossible to describe the sensations of Maude and her companion, when they were certain they were coming; the hope of deliverance was great, but it is difficult to say, whether the fear of being betrayed did not more strongly operate on their hearts, which beat tumultuously when they perceived by the light, which gleamed through the numerous apertures, that the
strangers

strangers had discovered the path, and whether friends or foes, to meet them now was unavoidable. Editha fainted in the arms of Maude, who was herself in a situation nearly similar; she had by nature spirits that did not often shrink at every trivial appearance of difficulty, but she had exerted them to support her companion beyond her ability, and with pain did she support the weight of the insensible Editha.

In less than the space of five minutes, she found herself surrounded by those who had so readily afforded her their assistance, but every attempt to thank them was rendered ineffectual, by the continual shouting and huzzas, which, it seems, was meant as a signal victory over their less successful companions.

At length, Maude heard them tell one another that the strangers were coming, but who the strangers might be, it little

concerned her to be informed, even if information could have been obtained, but of that there was no possibility, and she continued using her endeavours to revive Editha, who on opening her eyes, and beholding so many strangers, had immediately relapsed.

As soon as the stranger, as the mariners termed him, was informed that the ladies were found, in praise of whose beauty the sailors were expressing their honest admiration, he desired to be conducted to them, but words cannot express his astonishment, when he beheld the features of Maude and Editha Clarendon; he clasped the latter fondly to his bosom, and in a voice which Maude recollected to be that of Albert de Clare, breathed his fears that she was dying.

A little time however convinced him his fears were groundless; Editha recovered, and he was happy, and it was proposed that

that they should directly set out for the Castle; to this Maude made not the slightest objection, and willing'y accepting the arms of two of the honest men that followed Albert, she began to descend the path-way, leaving Editha to his care, who she well knew had too sincere a regard for her safety, not to do more to contribute to it than any other person.

As she passed on, she heard something like a contention amongst those that were following, and on asking the occasion of it, she found that her brother Walter, who left the ship with Albert, had, by losing his torch, lost his way, by which means he had not till then joined the party, and that moment was employed in contending with Albert for the honor of protecting Editha, as he asserted that it was equally gallant to which of the ladies Albert paid his attentions, but it would be truly absurd for him to pay compliments to his sister. Al-

bert, though he was ever fearful of betraying the interest he felt for Editha, was resolute in his determination not to resign her, and telling Walter gravely, that as he always thought that he regarded both as his sisters, it must be immaterial to which of them he afforded protection ; reminded him that Maude was alone with people who, though honest, were such as she was little used to.

Resentment burnt in the breast of Walter ; but reflecting that any further contention would render him suspected of entertaining sentiments that, if divulged, would put it for ever out of his power to obtain Editha : he yielded to necessity ; and with apparent pleasure, and inward discontent, went forward to offer his assistance to Maude ; but his forced attention was received with coldness, and she told him she preferred the aid of her present guides to any other, which compliment doubled their
affiduities

affiduities and Walter's discontent; and he had the mortification of entering the Castle, without having

“ Earnt a place i' the story.”

The domestics of Clarendon, alarmed at the absence of their ladies at so unusual an hour, had at length informed the Baron, who had immediately sent out different ways in hopes of finding them.

Not wishing that their frequent excursions to the coast should be observed, they generally took a contrary road to that which was commonly frequented, and at a small distance from the Castle struck into a secret path that led to the rocks, and also by that means avoided passing near the forest, which they must otherwise have done. To the only place, therefore, where they might have been found none of the messengers had directed their steps, and had returned

with the unwelcome intelligence that they had been unsuccessful.

On entering the Castle they found the Baron pacing the hall with agitated steps, in all the agony of suspense, and he welcomed the return of his daughters with looks of pleasure, to which his countenance had been many months a stranger ; but it soon gave place to solicitude on observing the pallid looks of Editha, who he earnestly requested to retire immediately, and endeavour to recruit her exhausted frame by repose.

Maude attended her to her chamber, and after seeing that every thing proper was administered to Editha, she descended again to the hall, for the Baron, anxious to know what accident had occasioned their alarming absence, had sent to know if she was retired for the night ; and on learning she was not, expressed a wish that she
would

would join him in the hall at supper, with Albert de Clare and Walter; and after the repast he begged to know to what cause he must attribute the unexpected pleasure of his son and nephew's return; which was, that the intended marriage was broke off, and Albert happy in being at liberty to pursue his inclinations.

When he, in compliance with his father's wishes, and in conformity with his own opinion, paid his addressee to Lady Blanch Marly, she had given him every reason to imagine that the proposal met with her approbation; yet it is certain that nothing was ever farther from her intention than to accept it: but it was a proposal so little expected, that she was totally at a loss how to act, and she therefore determined to appear perfectly pleased with the compliment, but to delay the marriage as long as possible, in hopes of rendering herself disagreeable to Albert,

and of inducing him to retract; in which case she had little doubt but Sir Arthur would, to revenge himself on his son, surrender the whole of her fortune into her own possession.

Her conduct plainly proved that she was but little acquainted with the hearts of either; for Sir Arthur would never have promoted the alliance but from a firm belief of her attachment to his son, which she had contributed all in her power to deceive him into: and as to being more disagreeable to Albert de Clare than she was at present, that was an impossibility, for she had ever met with his most cordial disapprobation; but to oblige his father, and if possible banish from his memory the loved idea of Editha, was the first object of his wishes, and if he must marry, it was indifferent to whom.

Had

Had Lady Blanch been blessed with more discrimination and less artifice, she would have perceived that as her fortune was the grand object of her wishes, there was not any method so likely to obtain the possession of it as by a candid avowal of the true state of her heart to Sir Arthur, who would without hesitation have put her into its immediate possession; for as she had ever regarded Lord Marly's will as a severe one, he would have thought no method so proper to discharge the important trust reposed in him, as by rendering happy the daughter he had consigned to his care; but ignorant of the confusion he was creating, Sir Arthur was extremely anxious to behold the marriage take place before his son had time to change his resolution, a circumstance which he had discernment sufficient to perceive was by no means unlikely to be the case.

Every

Every thing bore so great an appearance of reality, that Lady Blanch began to find the Duke of Somerset was not so easily to be managed as she had supposed. Albert was now almost totally with her, and the Duke hesitated not to express his astonishment, not wholly unmixed with censure, at her conduct in permitting his so frequent attendance; but receiving from her nothing but evasive answers, and perhaps infected with jealousy, he determined on demanding an explanation from Albert. The Duke's heart was truly generous and free from interested every motive: he admired the beauty, and, as he persuaded himself, the merits of Lady Blanch, the possession of her hand was the height of his ambition, and blessed in the enjoyment of his own affluent fortune, he bestowed not a moment's concern on hers; and though, in compliance with her pleasure, he had consented for a time to conceal his attachment, his pride revolted at the conduct.

When

When Albert had professed his sentiments, the Duke had strenuously opposed her determination of receiving his addresses till an opportunity offered for breaking with him; but his opposition had then arose merely from the pain he felt at the thought of inflicting it on others: and to so ardent a lover as the Duke of Somerset it appeared an absolute impossibility for any one to be often in company with the Lady Blanch without becoming the slave of her numerous perfections: he had now, however, a reason still nearer to his heart than the mere love of benevolence; the inexplicable conduct of Lady Blanch, led him to suspect that Albert was in reality the object of her affections, and an occurrence that soon after happened at the banquet given by the heir of Northumberland on his marriage, put the Duke so far beyond his patience, that he at once forgot the promise of silence he had given, and the consequence of breaking it.

Albert

Albert conducted Lady Blanch to the banquet, where they were in a very few minutes joined by the Duke, who had stationed himself in a convenient part of the hall on purpose to observe their entrance; he was instantly by the side of Lady Blanch, and warmly solicited the favor of her hand in the dance.

The Lady hesitated. Albert had previous to their entering made the same request, and been honoured with her concurrence, for she knew not that the Duke was to be of the party.

The Duke repeated his request, and Lady Blanch knew that her refusal would most likely, after the expostulation of the morning, lose him for ever; and that to refuse Albert might have the effect she wished, of inducing him to decline concluding the marriage. The idea once formed was almost as good as executed, and Lady Blanch
on

on the point of quitting the protection of Albert : but it was necessary, for the good success of the plan, that she should appear blameless, and he absurd, at least in the good opinion of Sir Arthur ; but at the moment she turned her head to tell Albert she had accepted the Duke for her partner, her eyes met those of Sir Arthur. “ Do you not dance to-night, fair Lady ? ” said he.—“ Certainly, Sir ; but I have not yet been required to enter the dancing-room.”

“ I believe we shall not be too soon, Lady Blanch,” said Albert ; “ if you will favor me with your hand——”

The Duke of Somerset looked half anxiety and half displeasure, as he took the other hand of Lady Blanch : but Lady Blanch had little idea of suffering controul from any one ; and willing to let the Duke see what he had to trust to, and also to deceive Sir Arthur, with an air of the greatest pleasure

sure and familiarity she gave her hand to Albert.

The Duke instantly quitted the assembly in silence ; and Albert, who had observed his actions, enquired if she had disappointed him of a partner. " Certainly not," said she ; " I was engaged before, and consequently there can be no offence : but come, we are wanted, let us not be too late, because the Duke of Somerset is discontented."

Albert was satisfied, and joined in the amusements of the evening, that is, he seemed to do so ; but pleasure and Albert never met beyond the walls of Clarendon. With regard to the transaction of the night, he had heard nothing but from Lady Blanch, as he had been during her conference with the Duke in conversation with Sir Arthur ; and though he understood the Duke

Duke had asked her hand, he saw nothing in that to disturb him.

He was sensible that Lady Blanch, tho' never calculated to inspire him with love, was possessed of attractions that seldom failed to render her an object of almost universal admiration; and consequently it was no wonder that the Duke of Somerset, who might probably be ignorant of her engagement, should be amongst the number of her admirers.

The Duke, however, was not of so placid a disposition, or more properly speaking, he was not so indifferent about the lady, and he retired only to meditate on the revenge he panted for; and no sooner did Albert reach his apartment, than he found he had a much more serious business on his hand than he expected, for his servant immediately delivered him a challenge sent by the Duke of Somerset: he had fixed the
next

next morning for their meeting, and declared he would never again behold Lady Blanch till he had proved himself capable of defending her honor and his own.

To Albert his message was unintelligible, except the meeting in the morning, and on that point he was determined not to fail; yet as it also intimated that the Duke had been long a favoured lover, a circumstance that Albert had never suspected, it was his intention to request some explanation on that subject; and if after that the Duke continued to hold his present determination, he would not decline his sword.

Had it been in any other cause Albert had perhaps been less cool, but he well knew Lady Blanch to be deeply versed in artifice; and if on this occasion she had practised deception, he hoped to detect it. He knew also that Sir Arthur thought very differently of her from himself, and he wished

wished him to be unequivocally convinced of his error ; but still more did he feel that his heart was, spite of his endeavours to forget her, still anxiously attached to Editha ; and though convinced he could never now be benefited by his freedom, yet to live unmarried and devoted to her service was a blessing before which every other consideration vanished into air.

Sir Arthur had been some hours retired, and to keep from his knowledge the business of the ensuing morning was the wish of his son ; yet how could he resolve to quit his father's house, perhaps for ever, without one farewell ; yet this he must do, or subject him and Lady de Clare to hours of anxious solicitude.

While he sat wrapped in reflections of not the most entertaining nature, he was suddenly aroused by loud knocking at the gate, and he presently distinguished that it
was

was Walter and his attendants returning from the banquet, and whom he soon heard ascending the staircase. The door of Albert's apartments was open, and in walked Walter, full of spirits, and not one serious thought in his whole composition. "Now, by my soul, de Clare, I never knew any good come of the midnight meditations of you serious gentlemen; better you had staid with us, I tell you, ha!—No, gad, I don't know but you are as well employed as 'tis. Pry'thee, if one may make a little reasonable enquiry without danger of giving offence, from what kind fair one came this precious little morsel?" seizing the note that Albert had left open on the table. "It came from no kind fair one, my good cousin, though I confess it concerns one who is, I shrewdly suspect, not worth the trouble."

"Poh! you blockhead; what, I suppose the poor girl has let somebody else salute

lute her lap-dog, eh ! Why now what an unreasonable, unfeeling creature you must be ; they must amuse themselves, I tell you, they must ; come, come, forgive her, man, forgive her, man, and let's have a bottle to toast your reconciliation !" and throwing aside his cloak, he took possession of Albert's sofa, perfectly satisfied without going any further.

" I tell you, I'll bring it about ; never disturb yourself. But who is she, Albert ?"

" That is more, perhaps, than I shall trust to your discretion, Walter."

" Nay, but you may with safety ; trust me, Lady Blanch shall never get the secret from me. Come, come, I say, who is she ?"

Albert, serious as he was, could not forbear smiling at Walter's mistaken idea of his jealousy ; but he, impatient of delay,
and

and longing to be made acquainted with the story, had very deliberately amused himself in reading the precious little billet, as he called it.

“ Well, Sir, what think you of the lady now,” said Albert.—“ Think ! why she’s a jilt ; but never mind it, you may get a regiment such as her in the court any day.”

“ Aye, by our lady, or the country either—but the challenge ; I have no second.”
—“ Take me with you then ?” and he placed his hat and feather *à la militaire*.
“ But apropos, have you made your will ?”

“ No, I do not intend to make any : my heart has long since been disposed of ; and as to my possessions, they are trifles I care not what becomes of. Ah ! would to heaven my affection had been well received.”

“ Why

"Why, aye, I wish myself she had used you better; but, hang it, never mind her, let the Duke take her, and wish him joy."

"Oh! you mistake me greatly, Walter; it is not the loss of Lady Blanch that could give me one moment's uneasiness: you are but a mad confidant; but suffer me to entreat the performance of a favor with which I candidly own I would not entrust you with the knowledge but from necessity. To-morrow may perhaps deprive me of existence, for that I care not, on my own account, for it has long since lost charms; but Editha—." Walter started at hearing her name from Albert, whom he had never suspected of being his rival. "What of Editha?" demanded he. Let her not want a protector when I shall be no more; commend me too to the good Baron, and should it be my lot to fall, comfort as much as possible my parents. I do not, if I can

VOL. II. O possibly

possibly avoid it, intend to see either of them before I leave the house ; be it your task to clear my conduct from all suspicion of unkindness. I know my mother would leave no means unattempted to dissuade me from this meeting ; my heart revolts at refusing her any thing ; but I need not say it would be impossible to oblige her, neither have I courage sufficient to say adieu. Promise me, Walter, to perform these services, and you will much oblige me."

"Assure yourself I will remember them."

"I thank you, and now, let me intreat you to leave me. To-morrow at four I will expect you."

"You may depend on my attendance ; good night."

Walter

Walter was no longer gay and lively ; he had arrived at the knowledge of a secret that threatened fresh opposition to his wishes, and the thought rendered his behaviour very different from what it usually was, and not wishing that to be observed, he wisely took the opportunity of retiring as soon as possible ; while Albert, who as it was late determined not to seek repose that night, passed the few intervening hours in writing to his father.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

a sketch by Long wounded Henry